

IV.

INQUIRIES RESPECTING SOME OF THE EARLY HISTORICAL WRITERS OF SCOTLAND. (1846-1847.) By DAVID LAING, Esq., FOREIGN SECRETARY, S.A. SCOT.

In the List of Communications to the Society of Antiquaries contained in the "Archæologia Scotica," Vol. IV., Appendix p. 36-38, under the above title, are the following entries. This was in the years 1846 and 1847 : at that time the Proceedings had not been commenced, which have since proved the most effectual method of preserving short or occasional Communications, from year to year. On turning over some old papers, I recently found the notes connected with the above Series, which had in a great measure escaped my recollection.

The following are the titles of the earlier numbers of the Series :—

1846, FEBRUARY 23.

- No. 1. Friar ADAM ABEL, of Jedburgh, author of the "Rota Temporum."
- No. 2. JOHN LAW, Canon of St Andrews, one of the Abbreviators of the Scotichronicon.

1847, JANUARY 25.

- No. 3. Mr JOHN COLVILLE, the supposed author of the "Historie and Life of King James the Sext," published by the Bannatyne Club, in 1825.

1847, FEBRUARY 8.

- No. 3. Mr JOHN COLVILLE, continued.
- No. 4. SIR WILLIAM BRUCE of Earlsball, in Fife.

On finding these papers, it occurred to me that if these Inquiries were

resumed, it might give an opportunity of including the earlier portions of the Series in this year's proceedings.

To the above I proposed at least to have added in continuation—

- No. 5. WILLIAM ELPHINSTON, Bishop of Aberdeen, the supposed Continuator of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, in 1463.
 No. 6. The Anonymous Chronicle of James II., King of Scots, preserved in Asloan's MS. in the Auchinleck Library.
 No. 7. The History of Scotland, 1436 to 1561. By JOHN LESLEY, Bishop of Ross.

NO. 1. ADAM ABEL, OF JEDBURGH, AUTHOR OF THE
 "ROTA TEMPORUM."

(FEBRUARY 23, 1846.)

There are some points connected with the early Historical Writers of Scotland, to which I purpose occasionally calling the attention of the Society. As the two writers named in the billet of the present meeting may be called obscure, no excuse is required for treating them very briefly. The *ROTA TEMPORUM*, or Wheel of Time, is a work which probably still exists, although all my inquiries have hitherto failed to ascertain the fate of the volume. In one of Sir Robert Sibbald's MS. vols. of collections in the Advocates' Library, entitled "*De Historicis Scotis*," he simply mentions Abel's work as follows:—

"Chronicon dicta *Rota Temporum*, the Rota or Wheel of Tyme, by one of the Brothers of the Minors Observants of Jedward, is kept in the Lord Tarbet his Librarie."

In like manner Bishop Nicolson, in the "Scottish Historical Library,"¹ published in 1702, says:—

"The *Rota Temporum* is a Chronological compendium of Scotch History, written by a Brother of the Minor Observants at Jedburgh, in the year 1533. The book is in my Lord Tarbet's library, and is quoted as a good authority by Camden."²

The only reference to the "*Rota Temporum*" I find in Camden's

¹ Scottish Historical Library, Lond. 1702, 8vo, p. 110.

² Britain, N.E., col. 921.

“Britannia,” as translated by Dr Philemon Holland (Lond. 1610, folio, Scotland, p. 28), is found under *Scotland*, Sheriffdom of Stirlingshire, in his account of the Roman wall called Graham’s Dyke, in the following paragraph :—

“Now this Wall is commonly called *Graham’s Dyke* ; either of *Graham* a warlike Scot, whose valour was especially seene when the breach was made through it, or else of the hill *Grampie*, at the foote whereof it stood. The author of *Rota Temporum* calleth it the wall of *Aber-corneth*, that is, of the mouth of the river Corneth : where, in Bede’s time, there was a famous monasterie standing, as hee hath recorded, upon English ground, but neere unto that frith or arne of the sea, which in those daies severed the lands of the English and the Picts.”

Camden’s own words are—“Vocatur autem murus iste vulgo *Graham’s dyke*, vel a *Grahamo* Scoto bellicoso cujus virtus in eo perrumpendo inprimis eminebat, vel a *Grampio* fronte ad cujus radices visitur. Qui *Rotam Temporum* scripsit, murum de *Abercorneth* appellat,” *Ostii Corneth* flu. ubi Bedæ seculo, &c. (Londini, 1607, p. 700, folio.)

It may, perhaps, be doubted whether it actually was Friar Abel’s work to which Camden refers.

In Spottiswood’s Account of Religious Houses : Franciscan Friars, second section, Observantines or Mendicant Friars, he says :—

“JEDBURGH, the chief town in Teviotdale, upon the west side of the Jed, which rises from divers burns that meet below the kirk Sudan, and falleth a little below Jedburgh into the river Teviot. There the citizens founded a Convent for those Friars, in the year 1513.

“ADAM ABEL, a famous writer, lived and died in this monastery. He was first a Canon-Regular of Inchaffray, and afterwards became a Gray-Friar in this convent. He wrote a History of our nation in Latin, at the solicitation of George Lord Seton,¹ intitulated *Rota Temporum*, which was afterwards printed at Rome, by John Lesley, Bishop of Ross, with some small alterations and additions. Thereafter he made an abridgment of it in English ; the original whereof was lost at Roslin, at the Revolution, when the mob spoiled the Castle. He began at the creation of the world and ended in the year 1535, in the octave of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Afterwards he continued the work until the year 1536. On the

¹ There were four Lord George Setons in succession.

first leaf he begins—"In the name of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lady, St Francis, and St Augustine." An imperfect copy of this book was in the library of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh."¹

How the report originated, of the "*Rota Temporum*" having been printed at Rome, I cannot imagine. It certainly forms no part of Bishop Lesley's own work "*De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus Gestis Scotorum Libri Decem. Romæ, 1578,*" 4to. There is also some confusion regarding Lord Tarbet's manuscript. Father Augustine Hay, in his Genealogy of the Saint Claires of Rosslyn, dated 1700, states that the monuments and various portions of Rosslyn Chapel were either destroyed or a "little defaced" by the rabble, the eleventh of December 1688, about 10 of the clock att night, after the Castle had been spoiled; where (he adds) I lost several books of note, and amongst others, the *original manuscript of Adam Abel*, which I had of my Lord Tarbet, then Register." The notice quoted from Bishop Nicolson, 1702, proves that Lord Tarbet's MS. was then in his possession. Sir George Mackenzie, Viscount Tarbet, was created Earl of Cromarty in January 1703; and died 17th August 1714, in the 84th year of his age. In the sale catalogue of what was called a "very valuable collection of books," containing the chief portion of Lord Cromarty's library, sold at Edinburgh in the year 1746, the title occurs of apparently the MS. in question.

It may also be noticed that in a letter of Thomas Hearne (the Oxford antiquary) addressed to James West, November 23, 1731, preserved in the British Museum, he says:—"He believes Lord Pembroke hath also many excellent MSS., but of these I never had any account whatsoever, unless it be of one which is the "*Rota Temporum*," being a piece of Scottish history, but I think there is nothing of note in it but what is in Fordun," &c.² If this refers to a MS. of Friar Abel's work, it may probably still be preserved in the splendid library of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton House, Salisbury.

¹ Appendix to Hope's *Minor Practicks*, edit. 1734; and reprinted in Keith's *Scottish Bishops*.

² Hearne's *Letters*, Lansdowne MSS., No. 778, f. 215.

No. II. DE CRONICIS SCOTORUM BREVIA. By JOHN LAW,
CANON OF ST ANDREWS. 1521.

(FEBRUARY 23, 1846.)

This Breviate of the Scotichronicon forms the chief portion of a little manuscript volume preserved in the University Library, Edinburgh. Several years ago, when engaged in preparing the great mass of books in the Old College Library, before its removal to the new buildings, in the year 1827,—a very arduous task, which occupied me for many months,—I brought together the various Manuscripts in the Library, and made a scroll Catalogue of them. This never was completed, there being no prospect at the time of having it printed.

I described the contents of this little volume, AC. c. 26, as follows:—

1. The first article in the volume is a printed tract (wanting the title), 11 leaves. It has, on the last page, this colophon—*Explicit Catalogus Summorum Pontificum. Impressum Parisiis pro Joanne Parvo, anno Dñi. 1518 die 14 mensis Augusti.*” Under this is the name of the donor—“*Magister Andreas Cranston, Theologiæ studiosus, Adolescens optimæ spei, hunc Lib. Manuscriptum Bibliothecæ Edinburgenæ, dono dedit, anno Domini 1680.*”

2. At the foot of the first page of the manuscript is written, “*Editum per Johannem Law, Canonicum Sancti Andree.*” It commences with an Obituary list—“*Nomina Episcoporum Priorum Sancti Andree. Catalogus Episcoporum Sancti Andree,*” &c., 10 leaves. Also

3. *Episcopatus Regni Scotie—Abbatibus et Abbatibus Scotie—Monasteria Scocie—Prioratus—Perfectura—Monasteria Monialium—3 leaves.*

4. *Supplementum Cronicarum, etc., 16 leaves.*

5. *Inicium Scotichronicon (ab Anno Mundi 1668).* The running title of this abridgment of the Scotichronicon, is “*De Cronicis Scotorum Brevia.*” It is continued to the year 1521, on 98 leaves. At the foot of the last page is written, “*Et tamen de Regibus, et Temporibus Regni Scotorum, ad annum nostre Salutis, 1521.*”

There are, at the end of the volume, sixteen additional leaves, containing lists of the Kings of England and other matters, including a “*Continuatio Cronicarum,*” 1521 to 1536, apparently in Law’s hand, along

with some miscellaneous notes and extracts ; also a copy of a well-known ballad on "The Nine Worthies," beginning "*Hector of Troye*," &c.

The short Continuation of the Chronicle gives it the appearance of an original work, rather than a mere transcript. In the year 1521, in noticing what Lindesay of Pitscottie called "a great marvel then seen in Scotland, of a child born with two bodies joined together, but Law cautions the reader by adding, "*hic non vidimus, sed a videntibus veraciter acceptimus.*" This Continuation, however, is much less copious than we could have desired ; for instance, how much more interesting it would have been had Law recorded any particulars respecting the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton at St Andrews in 1528, instead of simply noticing the fact of his condemnation for heresy ?

This manuscript, which is in a small hand, filled with contractions, was found to contain some particulars relating to a conflict between the Johnstones and the Douglasses in the year 1455 ; and the volume was to have been produced in evidence in the Annandale Peerage Case, had not the death of Sir George Frederick Johnston of Westerhall, in May 1841, put a stop to all immediate proceedings in that claim.

No particulars of Law's history have been discovered. From Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*, vol. ii. p. 283, we find that the donor of the MS. was admitted Minister of Greenock in July 1681. He probably died early. Cranston's successor at least appears to have been appointed in 1683.

No. III. MR JOHN COLVILLE.

(1847.)

My notes regarding Colville, read to the Society in 1847, have not been preserved. The cause of this was that they served for materials when preparing the Memoir prefixed to the volume entitled "Original Letters of Mr JOHN COLVILLE, 1582-1603. To which is added, his Palinode, 1600." Edinburgh, 1858. 4to. This handsome volume was printed at the expense and presented to the Members of the Bannatyne Club by the EARL OF SELKIRK in the year 1858.

In regard to the anonymous History of King James the Sixth, preserved in various manuscripts, it was first published in 1706 by David Crawford of Drumsoy, historiographer to Queen Anne. He gave it this title—"Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, containing a Full and Impartial

Account of the Revolution in that Kingdom, begun in 1567. Faithfully published from an authentic MS., by Her Majesty's Historiographer for the Kingdom of Scotland." London, 1706, 8vo. It was republished also, as an authentic history, by Walter Goodall. Edinburgh, 1753. 12mo. Some copies have a new title-page, calling it "the third edition," in 1767. The work itself, being quoted as genuine by Hume and Robertson, obtained a good deal of notoriety in the continuous discussions at a later period, on the alleged guilt or innocence of Mary Queen of Scots.

Mr Malcolm Laing, the historian, having accused Crawford as guilty of want of fidelity in publishing this as an original work, which (he says) exhibited fictions invented by Crawford, and having traced the MS. which Crawford professed to have faithfully published, in order to justify himself, he published the genuine text with the title, "The Historie and Life of King James the Sext (1566-1582). Written towards the latter part of the Sixteenth Century." Edinburgh, 1804. 8vo. "The discovery of the manuscript," he says, "affords a complete detection of the earliest if not the most impudent literary forgery ever practised in Scotland." He adds, "every circumstance in the manuscript, unfavourable to either Mary or to Bothwell, or favourable to their adversaries, is carefully suppressed."

A later edition of the original work, printed for the Bannatyne Club, from a collation of other early MSS. with Continuations, was edited by Thomas Thomson, Esq., V.P. It has this title, "The Historie and Life of King James the Sext; being an account of the affairs of Scotland from the year 1566 to the year 1596; with a short Continuation to the year 1617." Edinburgh, 1825. 4to. But in neither of these editions is there any suggestion made regarding the anonymous Author.

In the volume of Colville's Letters already mentioned, I suggested that he was the original author, as might be inferred from the resemblance of some quotations given by Sir Robert Gordon in 1630, when he refers as one of his authorities, under the year 1581, to "a manuscript wrytten by Mr John Colvin, touching the effairs of Scotland in his tyme."

In tracing out this allusion, which seemed to establish the fact, when compared with the course of Colville's eventful life, I subjoined this note:—"It is but proper to add that my attention to this passage was directed by the late Mr Donald Gregory, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, whose accuracy and intelligence in investigating

matters connected with the Highlands were beyond all praise. I may also take the opportunity to state that some portions of the following memoir and of the above preface formed the subject of two communications read to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1847."

No further light has been discovered in regard to its Authorship.

I will now merely add that Colville, the second son of Robert Colville of Cleish, was born about the year 1542, and was educated for the Church at the University of St Andrews, where he took his A.M. degree in 1560 or 1561. He first appears as parish minister in the Reformed Church, at Kilbryde, in 1567. He also became Precentor of Glasgow, retaining his connexion with that Church until about 1580, when he resigned to avoid deposition for neglecting his parochial duties. His selfish reason was, "he would not profess poverty." After acting as a busy political agent or informer, he retired to France, and joined the Roman Catholics. He died at Paris, where the English Ambassador, in his correspondence with Secretary Cecill, says: "Old John Colvill, that busy-brained Scot" died in great want and misery, November 1605.

NO. IV. SIR WILLIAM BRUCE OF EARLSHALL.

(FEBRUARY 1847.)

In resuming these occasional notices of our early Historical writers, my chief object is either to ascertain the authorship of some well-known anonymous works, or to collect any scattered references to other works which are probably still preserved in private collections, although at present they remain undiscovered.

Of the latter class, one is a Chronicle or Diary written towards the middle of the sixteenth century, by Sir WILLIAM BRUCE of Earlshall. This appears from the History or Chronicles of Scotland, "sought, gathered, written, and collected" by Robert Lindesay of Pitscottie, in the year 1575. Among his authorities, he mentions "SIR WILLIAM BRUCE OF EARLSHALL, Knight, who (he says) has written, very justly, all the deeds since Floudeun Field." Pitscottie, in his amusing but very inaccurate compilation, gives no special reference or quotations from his authorities that might have served to identify them.

Another reference to Bruce occurs in a passage in Knox's History of the Reformation, where, in March or April 1558, describing the double

dealing of the Queen Regent, by promising, on the one hand, her assistance to the Reformed preachers, "untill some uniform order might be established by a Parliament;" and, on the other hand, by "giving the (Popish) clergy to understand that, so soon as opportunity offered, she should remedy the present disorders; for which (it is added) some say they gave her a large purse, 40,000 lib., sayes the CHRONICLE gathered by the LAIRD OF ERLISHALL" (Works, vol. i. p. 307). Several copies of Knox omit the words, "sayis the Chronicle," leaving the passage as if the Laird of Earlsall had himself gathered or collected that sum of £40,000.

In the series of Bannatyne Club Books, one edited by Thomas Thomson, Esq., V.P., has the title, "A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents that have passed within the Country of Scotland since the Death of King James the Fourth, till the year 1575. From a Manuscript of the Sixteenth Century, in the possession of Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, Baronet." Edinburgh 1833. 4to. The existence of this MS. was first pointed out by Mr John Riddell, advocate, in the course of his researches, as a work of historical importance. The editor says, "Of the author or compiler of the following 'Diurnal,' nothing is known, or seems likely to be discovered." The work itself consists evidently, as Mr Thomson has pointed out, of three distinct portions, yet I imagine they were not originally compiled by one and the same hand. The dates are—

I. From September 1513 to 1553, pp. 1 to 51.

II. From 1557 to June 1572, pp. 51 to 265.

III. In two parts: (1) From 1554 to 1561; (2) from 1571 to 1575, when the volume terminates abruptly, pp. 266 to 350.

Of these we may at least conjecture that the first and part of the third portion, commencing with the sad disaster at Flodden in September 1513, were the work of Sir WILLIAM BRUCE. It is to be hoped, from the attention now directed to the preservation of Ancient Unpublished Documents, illustrating our National History, that the work itself may eventually be discovered.¹

¹ Among the MSS. in the library of John Duke of Lauderdale, sold by auction at London 1692, No. 21 was described: "Jo. Adamson's Brief Chronology of the Affairs of Scotland, beginning 1513 and ending 1572" (upon paper), fol. (Bannatyne Miscellany, vol. ii. p. 154.)

At present I may take this opportunity to add a few words respecting Bruce himself. According to Sir Robert Douglas (*Baronage*, p. 510), the family of Bruce of Airth, in Stirlingshire, and of Earlshall, in Fife, were lineally descended from Robert, first baron of Clackmannan (in 1359). Sir Alexander Bruce had a charter of the lands of Byrgham, in Berwickshire, 9th February 1485-6. He married Janet, daughter of Sir David Stewart of Rosythe, and had a charter to him and his spouse of the lands of Earlshall, &c., Fifeshire, 28th March 1497, and from this period Earlshall became the place of his residence, and chief title of his family. He died before 13th November 1504. His son married Margaret, a daughter of Meldrum of Seggie, and got a charter under the Great Seal to himself as Sir William Bruce and his spouse, dated 10th February 1539-1540. Another is dated in 1572. Douglas does not mention when he died. He appears, however, from the following inscription, discovered in the churchyard of Leuchars, to have attained the patriarchal age of 98 at the time of his death in 1584-5:—

HIC JACET VIR PROBVS AC OMNI MEMORIÆ DIGNUS, D.N.S. GULIELMUS
BRUCEUS, DE ERLISHAL MILES: QUI OBIT 28 DIES MENSIS JANUARIJ
ANNO DOMINI 1584: ANNOQUE SUE ÆTATIS 98.

The tombstone is 7 feet 2 inches in length, by 3 feet 10 inches in breadth. Underneath another inscription on the same stone reads—

HEIR LYIS OF AL PIETE ANE LANTERN BRYCHT
SCHIR WILLIAM BRUCE OF ERLISHALL KNYCHT.

The mansion house of Earlshall is in the parish of Leuchars, and Presbytery of St Andrews. In early times it had been the property of the Earls of Fife, from whom it derived its title. The building is of a castellated form, and belongs to a later period, and is situated about a mile and a half from the parish church. In vol. iii. of the "*History of the County of Fife*," by John M. Leighton, and published by Joseph Swan, there is a view of the old house of Earl's Hall, engraved by Joseph Swan from a drawing by James Stewart; and special notice is taken of the great Hall, which had been richly ornamented with heraldic arms, delineations, and inscriptions. I here exhibit drawings of portions to show the style. A similar style of ornament occurs in the old house of Calross, called "*The Palace*." See a communication by Mr Jervise

in the "Proceedings," vol. ii. p. 339; and also, vol. iv. p. 387, the "Notices of the Castle and Painted Room or Hall of Earlsall, in Fifeshire, by A. Jervise." "The Hall itself" (says Mr Jervise), "with its painted ceiling, is the most interesting part of the building; and unfortunately, from the roof not being water-tight, it has suffered considerably from damp, some of the panneling being broken, and many of the decorations effaced. The room is about 13 feet high, 50 feet long, and 18 feet wide. The ceiling, a sort of circular, is lined with wood; it had originally been divided into upwards of three hundred compartments, in which were painted armorial bearings and objects of natural history, either in animals or plants; also figures representing the Virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice. Black and white are the only colours used, and the Virtues are represented with the usual accompaniments, having the names painted below in Latin." The actual date of the building is recorded along with the arms, carved on the chimney-piece, of Sir William Bruce and his wife, Margaret Meldrum. *ÆDES HAS EXTRUEBAT D. W. B. ANNO 1546: EXTRUXIT TANDEM W. B. EJUS PRONEPOS ANNO 1617—D. W. B., M. M.—CONTEMNO ET ORNO MENTE MANU.* This clearly proves the house to have been founded in the year 1546 by Sir William Bruce, and completed by his great grandson Sir William Bruce in 1617.

I now beg to submit Nos. V., VI., and VII. to the Society.

No. V. WILLIAM ELPHINSTON, BISHOP OF ABERDEEN.

In continuing these Inquiries I purposed that the next number should relate to Bishop Elphinston, one of the reputed Continuator of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*. Many years ago, in *the Album* or List of books suggested for publication by the Bannatyne Club, I included this chronicle in five books, or the original text of Fordun, and select portions of the Oxford MS. For this purpose I had more than once examined the Fairfax MS., ascribed to Bishop Elphinston, preserved in the Bodleian Library. The last, or Book XI. of this Chronicle had been printed for the Maitland Club in 1837, in a volume entitled "The Life and Death of King James the First of Scotland," edited by the Rev. Joseph

Stevenson. At the sale of George Chalmers's library, 1842, I had acquired an earlier transcript of Books X. and XI. No other copy of what was called Elphinston's Chronicle was then known to exist. Among other MSS. of Fordun's Scotichronicon, I obtained a loan of one preserved in the University Library, Glasgow, and was surprised to find that it was similar to the Oxford MS., but with the earlier date 1461. I afterwards obtained the use of another Scotichronicon from the library of Sir Hugh Hume Campbell, Bart., of Marchmont House, hitherto unnoticed; and found that all the three copies might be said to be identically the same.

Mr Stevenson could not but admit that the Chronicle was erroneously ascribed to the Bishop of Aberdeen, as the writer tells us that he had accompanied the Princess Margaret from Scotland on the occasion of her unfortunate marriage with Louis XI., then known as Dauphin of France. This was in the year 1432; and he also states that he was present at the execution of Joan of Arc in 1436. Now, it is well known that Bishop Elphinston was born in the year 1437, studied at Glasgow, and latterly succeeded to the see of Aberdeen in 1484, where he died in October 1514. Having vainly endeavoured to ascertain, by conjecture or otherwise, the name of the probable Author, this, I imagine, may have led me to leave unfinished the further prosecution of this series of Historical Inquiries.

In commencing the proposed Series of the Early Historians of Scotland, Mr Forbes Skene in 1872 happily became editor of the "Scotichronicon" by its original author. He had previously made a systematic examination of the various known manuscripts of Fordun and his continuators. I know no person who could have done it in a more satisfactory manner, in his classification of the numerous MSS., to distinguish the original text from the several Continuations. This examination served to clear up some perplexities which need not be enlarged upon, being described by Mr Skene himself in his communications to this Society.¹

In regard to the manuscripts ascribed to Elphinston, and of others which I had personally examined, all I had to say has in some measure been anticipated by Mr Skene.² I hope before long the Chronicle

¹ Respecting the history of this Princess, who died in 1445, see the Proceedings vol. iii. p. 90-92.

² Proceedings of the Society, vol. viii. p. 239-256 Vol. ix. p. 13 to p. 24.

erroneously attributed to Bishop Elphinston of Aberdeen will appear in the next issue of the *Historians of Scotland*. Mr Skene has proved, I think, beyond all doubt, that the true author was MAURICE BUCHANAN, or MAURITIUS DE BUCHANAN, who was in France, and witnessed, as he tells us, the sad fate of Joan of Arc at Rouen in 1431; while he held the office of Treasurer to the Princess Margaret, from 1432 till her death in 1445, and compiled his *Chronicle* in the Priory of Pluscardine in 1461. This fact I consider as an important discovery, and in tracing the history of the author he has cleared up a point of some importance in the *Literary history of Scotland*, and identified the *Chronicle* with the "*Liber Pluscar densis*."

NO. VI. A SHORT CHRONICLE OF THE REIGN OF JAMES II., KING OF SCOTS.

This short *Chronicle* of an obscure period of Scottish history was printed and edited by Thomas Thomson, Esq., advocate, about the year 1817 or 1818, for private circulation. Very few copies, however, were distributed by Mr Thomson, as he purposed to subjoin notes and illustrations, but this intention never was fulfilled. In the manuscript from which it was taken, it has the following titles:—"Ane Addicioun of Scottis Corniklis and Deidis," and "Heir followis ane schort Memoriale of the Scottis Corniklis for addicioun."

In the printed text of the *Chronicle* this ends on page 28, when the Editor entitles it as above, "*A Short Chronicle of the Reign of James the Second, King of Scots*," and says:—"The historical fragment which forms the first part of this collection has been given with a scrupulous adherence to the original manuscript, not only in the inartificial and apparently accidental arrangement of events, but also in the errors of fact and of date, as well as in those of transcription which it exhibits. In that which follows, the same materials, with a few unimportant omissions, have been disposed somewhat more exactly in the order of time; some of the erroneous dates and accidental mistakes of transcription have been rectified," &c.

From this arrangement it appears that the *Chronicle* extends from the year 1436 to 1460-1. It is usually called the *Auchinleck Chronicle*,

from the circumstance that the MS. volume from which it was printed belonged to the Library at Auchinleck, Ayrshire.

This manuscript is a large folio volume, written on paper, consisting of miscellaneous pieces in Prose and Verse, collected and transcribed from MS. and printed copies towards the close of the reign of James the Fourth, or before the year 1514, by John Asloan, who appears to have been a Writer or Notary at Edinburgh. According to a "Table of Contents of the Buke," on the first leaf of the volume, numbered from cap. i. to lxxi., this Chronicle formed number xviii. of the collection. Most unfortunately the volume itself is defective of no less than thirty-four of these numbers, and these, for the most part, cannot be otherwise supplied. The transcriber, at the end of each article, besides the name of the author when known, usually adds this attestation, "Explicit per M. Jo. Asloan," or "Scriptum per Manum Johannis Asloan." That he uses "M." not in its usual signification as *Magister* is certain, as in another place he gives the attestation in the vernacular words, thus—"Written be the hand (per manum) of John Asloan." This, however, is a matter of no great moment.

The early history of Asloan's manuscript is not known. On the fly-leaf is the autograph signature, "Alex. Boswell, 1730," indicating the time when it came into his possession, no doubt in its very mutilated state.

I do not recollect having seen Asloan's manuscript in its original state. It was brought to Edinburgh early in the present century by Sir Alexander Boswell, when the leaves were inlaid by a skilful person employed on such work, and bound in the General Register House under the superintendence of Thomas Thomson, Esq., Deputy Clerk Register. The manuscript, along with some others from the same library, remained in Mr Thomson's hands for many years, until they were reclaimed by the late Mr James A. Maconochie, advocate, as one of the trustees of Sir Alexander's son, the late Sir James Boswell, Bart.

Alexander Boswell, Esq., of Auchinleck, was the representative of an ancient family of that name: he passed as advocate at the Scottish Bar, 29th December 1729; was raised to the Bench, and took his seat 15th February 1754 by the title of Lord Auchinleck, and died 25th August 1782, aged 76. His son James, the well-known biographer of Dr Johnson, died in 1795, leaving two sons, both of whom were eminent as literary characters.

The eldest son, Alexander, born in 1775, was created a Baronet in 1820, and was killed in an unfortunate duel 25th March 1822. The second son, James Boswell, a barrister-at-law in the Temple, is known as editor of Malone's important edition of the "Plays and Poems of Shakespeare," in 21 vols. The advertisement is dated "Temple, May 1821." Mr Boswell died about eight months after.

To return to the Chronicle, it was undoubtedly the work of an unknown author who flourished in the reign of King James the Second. From the title "for Addicione," we might infer that the original had been written on the margins of some special Scotichronicon. Asloan, who transcribed it, could not have the slightest claim to be considered the author. It has, like Law's Manuscript, No. II., obtained some notoriety from its containing a passage relating to the Johnstones of Annandale, and was formerly (in 1841) produced as evidence in a Peerage case not yet determined.

No. VII. THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND. BY JOHN LESLEY,
BISHOP OF ROSS, 1570.

The History of Scotland, from 1436 to 1561, by Bishop Lesley, which was written and presented to Mary Queen of Scots in the year 1570, remained unpublished and scarcely known till 1830. The importance of the work, however, suggested its publication for the BANNATYNE CLUB, by the Vice-President, Thomas Thomson, Esq., advocate, from a manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Leven and Melville. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this work is entirely different from Bishop Lesley's subsequent Latin history "De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus gestis Scotorum, Lib. X.," also dedicated to His Royal Mistress, and printed at Rome in the year 1578, 4to. This volume has been reprinted, but not translated.

Of the vernacular history there were three MSS. known, nearly of the same age. The Leven MS. being partially defective, I volunteered, as Honorary Secretary of the Club, to go to Oxford, and to collate the text of the volume which forms one of Archbishop Laud's MSS. in the Bodleian Library. It is unnecessary for me to say one word as to the editing of the volume by a gentleman who so long held the important office of Deputy Clerk Register, and was reckoned

the most eminent and judicious of our Historical Antiquaries. He has fully explained the history and authenticity of the work itself, which, indeed, has never been called in question. In the preliminary notice Mr Thomson refers to the third MS., when he merely says :—“ In the library at Dupplin, there is a copy of the work, of which only a transient inspection has been permitted by the present owner. It appears to be nearly of the same age with that of Archbishop Laud in the Bodleian Library.”

To explain this allusion, I may add, it was most desirable, before completing the printed volume for the Club, to ascertain by comparison in how far the printed sheets corresponded with the MS. at Dupplin (the Earl of Kinnoull, although a member of the Club, having refused the application to have the MS. sent, even for a limited time, to Edinburgh). I proceeded thither, in the neighbourhood of Perth, to make the comparison, and I sent the result to Mr Thomson with the following note :—

“ The manuscript of Bishop Lesley’s History in the library at Dupplin is a folio volume of 144 leaves, numbered, and evidently written by an English scribe towards the close of the sixteenth or early part of the following century. It corresponds in so many minute particulars with the MS. of the same work in the Bodleian Library that it is not improbable both may have been copied from the same original, although not that of the Author. The volume is partially mutilated, as in consequence of having stood in a damp place in the old library at Dupplin, the top corners of several of the leaves have mouldered away, or been rendered almost illegible. Of the two transcripts the Dupplin MS. is the least accurate, not merely as to actual mistakes committed, but in the occasional omission of words, and in one or two instances of an entire paragraph. On the whole it is evident, that had the Earl of Kinnoull granted the use of this copy when the book was in the printer’s hand, it would not have proved of any material advantage, the deficiencies in the Leven MS. having previously been supplied from the Oxford manuscript.

“ The volume is bound in old calf, of the latter part of the seventeenth century, and is lettered on the back ‘ A Manuscript of Scotland.’ At the end of the volume is a long Latin poem, written in a later hand, entitled ‘ Iter Boreale.’ It fills twelve pages, beginning ‘ *Quid mihi cum Musis? quid cum Borealibus oris?* ’ ” &c.