

I.

FAST CASTLE AND ITS OWNERS: SOME NOTES ON THEIR HISTORY.

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It is hardly necessary to say that the ruins of Fast Castle (fig. 1) stand on a rocky promontory on the Berwickshire coast, and that they have a witchery all their own. Only a few fragments of the keep and of the surrounding walls now remain, and these rest, peacefully in their solitude, on the brow of a little grass-covered plateau. The site is unique and perfect in its loneliness, and what is left of the ruin is just large enough to be in keeping with the scene. The promontory extends seawards for 266 feet, and its cliffs, rising from 100 to 150 feet, are well-nigh unclimbable from either sea or shore. It is now joined to the mainland by a very narrow pathway which was non-existent in olden times, the intervening chasm being then spanned by a drawbridge.

We cannot fail to be impressed by the intense isolation of the scene, and this is emphasised by the chattering hek-hek-hek of the peregrines as they circle the air from their centuries' old eyrie on the cliffs above, and by the yammer and the yoll of the gulls which resound all day long from the surrounding crags. It may be that its surroundings are now even more desolate than they were in the time of the Homes and the Logans, for the castle was then the "principal messuage" of the lands of Gunnisgreen, Flemington, etc., and of "the demesne lands of Fast castell called Wester Lummisden, Dowla and Duddoholme otherwise called Caldsyde with the Mill¹ of Fåst castell."²

One of the great through routes from Berwick to Dunbar and Edinburgh would pass near its gates, for in all probability this ran through

¹ The mill was in Dowlaw Dean, near the present bridge; see Blaeu's *Atlas*.

² *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vi., No. 778.



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Fig. 1. Fast Castle from the South, June 1908.

Coldingham, Lumsden farm, over Dowlaw, and on by St Helen's Kirk to the sands at the mouth of Pease Dean, on its way to Dunglas. Thus it would be but a step aside for a traveller to avail himself of the doubtful hospitality of Fast Castle.

Although, as Sir Walter Scott tells,¹ he never saw Fast Castle except from the sea, yet from this passing view he has left two delightful word pictures. Of Wolf's Crag he said: "A wilder, or more disconsolate dwelling, it was perhaps difficult to conceive"; and of Fast Castle: "Imagination can scarce form a scene more striking, yet more appalling, than this rugged and ruinous stronghold, situated on an abrupt and inaccessible precipice, overhanging the raging ocean, and tenanted of yore by men stormy and gloomy as the tempests they looked down upon."²

It is uncertain when it was last used as a place of residence. There is no record of this later than when Logan was conducting his desperate deeds against law and order. When he died in 1606 it came into the hands of the Earl of Dunbar, and it would then, no doubt, be used as a prison, when, as Commissioner of the Border, he "hanged over a hundred and forty of the nimblest and most powerful thieves in all the Borders."³ The Earl of Dunbar died in 1611, and his heirs sold it in 1615 to James Arnott, a son of the Provost of Edinburgh, who would probably, like his brother at Cockburnspath, lead a more homely life there than any of his predecessors. Of his brother, Taylor the Water Poet records that he was "a worthy gentleman whose chief delight was in giving strangers entertainment gratis, and who desired nothing so much as to know his duty towards God and the king and to practise works of piety, charity and hospitality."⁴ From Arnott the castle passed to the Earl of Home, and then, after some forfeitures and restorations, it came in 1682 to Sir John Hall of Dunglas, in whose family it remained till 1919, when it was acquired by Mr Frank Usher along with the Dunglas property.

PLANS AND PICTURES.

The earliest is "the platte of ffawscastle" (fig. 6), which was drawn to the scale of 32 feet to the inch, under the direction of Henry, second Earl of Rutland, when he was Lord Warden of the East and Middle Marches in 1549. Since then it has been preserved at Belvoir Castle, and, by the kindness of the Marquess of Granby, and by the permission of the Duke of Rutland, it is now reproduced for the first time. This plan is not only of interest as an important document in the history of the castle, but, from its being one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of any castle

¹ Introduction, *Bride of Lammermoor*.

² *Provincial Antiquities*, ii. p. 188.

³ *Scots Peerage*, iii. p. 237, quoting Balfour's *Annals*, i. p. 17.

⁴ Colonel Arnott's *House of Arnott*.

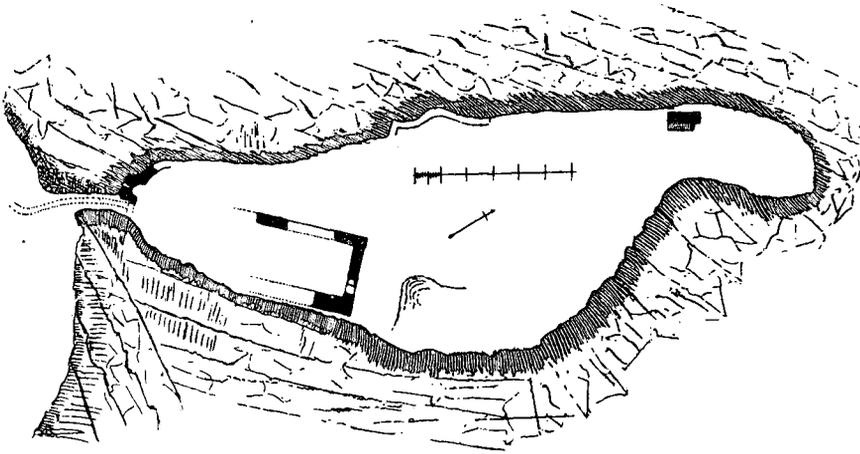


Fig. 2. Plan of Fast Castle in 1880.

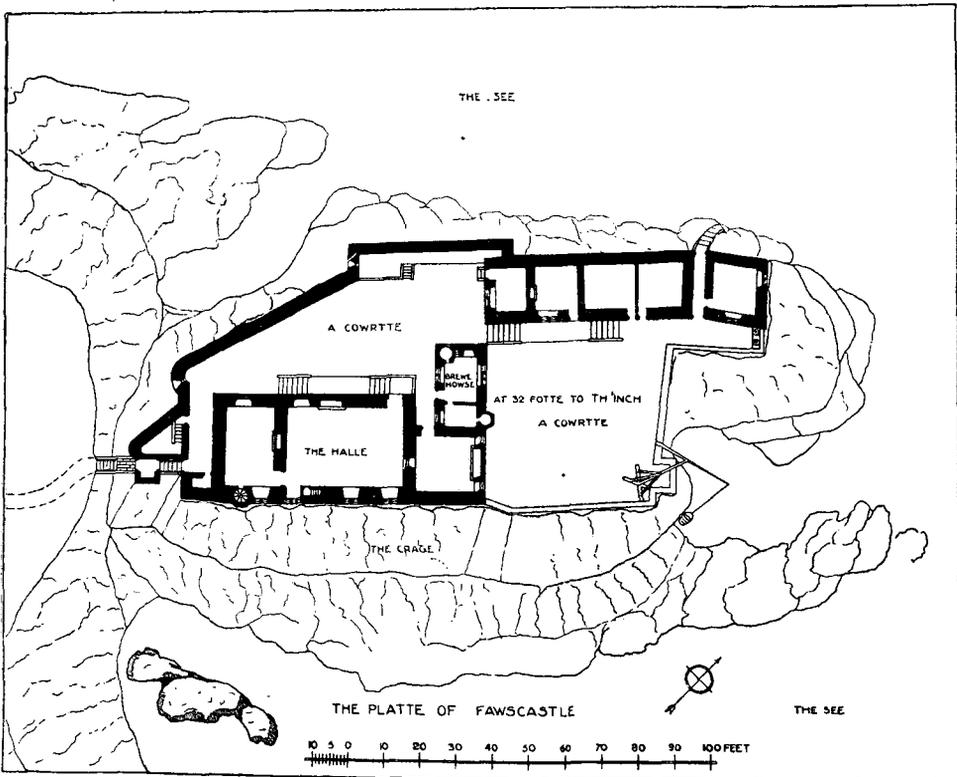


Fig. 3. Tracing of Plan made in 1549.

or house in Scotland. In comparing it with the plan of the castle made by Messrs M'Gibbon & Ross in 1880 (fig. 2), we see that most of the foundations of the old buildings have disappeared, and that only a portion of "the Halle" and of the curtain wall are now visible. However, enough now remains to confirm the accuracy of the old plan, and no doubt a careful search would reveal traces of the other foundations. The lettering on the old sixteenth-century plan reads as follows:—The See, Acowrtte,

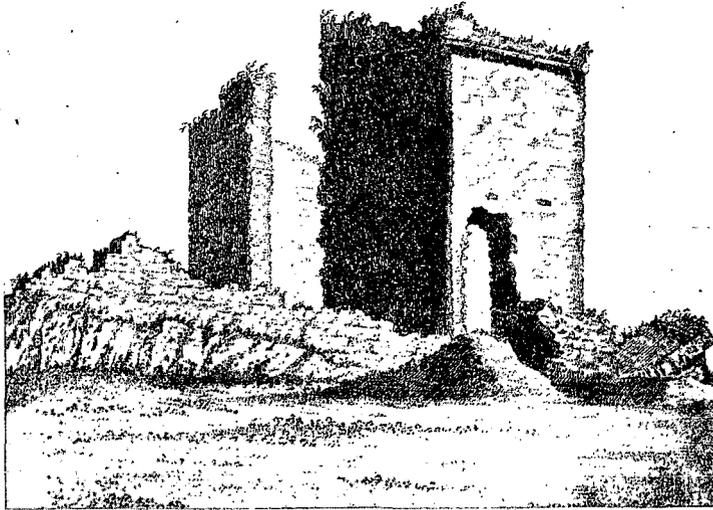


Fig. 4. Fast Castle from the North in 1789.

The Halle, brewehowse, At 32 fotte to thinch, Acowrtte, The Crage, The Platte of ffawscastle, The See.

In Blaeu's *Atlas* of 1645, there is a map of Mercia on which the castle is represented by a drawing of a conventional four-sided building. This is only interesting as an indication that it was in occupation at that time.

In 1778, it is noted, on a map of "the Great North Road," as being then in ruins.

In 1789, Adam de Cardonnel's etching, here reproduced (fig. 4), is the first pictorial representation we have of it, and it shows the building to be unroofed and the walls beginning to fall in.

In 1820, the Rev. John Thomson of Duddingston painted several pictures which are supposed to represent Fast Castle, but many of them are very fanciful.¹ The one in William Baird's *John Thomson* is perhaps

¹ There is one in Scott's *Provincial Antiquities*, one in Lang's *James VI.*; one in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, three in Napier's *Life of the Artist*, and one in Baird's book.

more true to nature than any of the others; but it is doubtful if so much of the walls was standing then as is shown in this picture.

In 1829, James Skene's etching in his *Localities of the Waverley Novels* gives a good idea of the state of the ruin at that date.

In 1836, Alex. A. Carr gives a picture of the ruins in his *History of Coldingham Priory*.

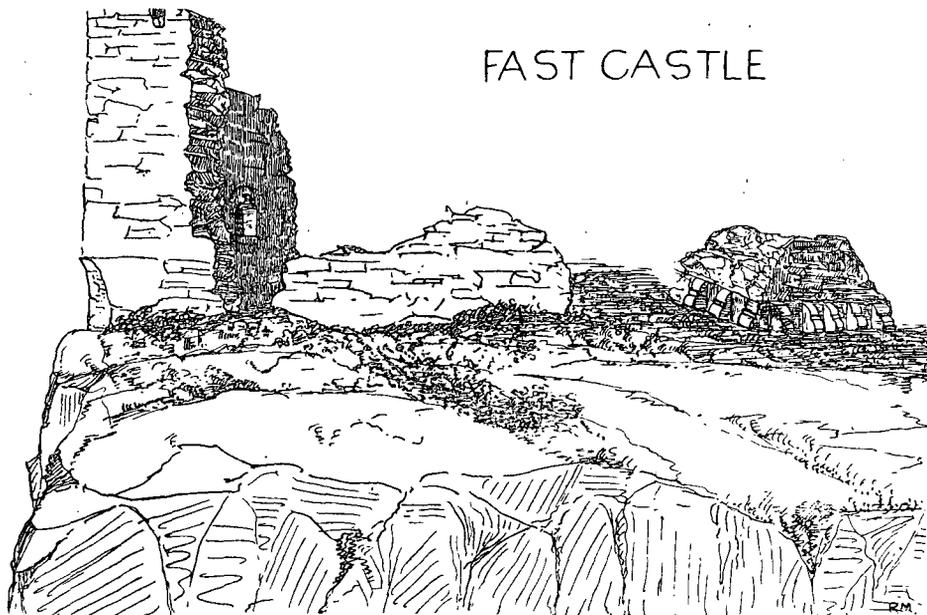


Fig. 5. Fast Castle from the North in 1880.

In 1880, M'Gibbon and Ross made some drawings of the castle¹ (fig. 5), and these show that much of the building has disappeared since then.

From these plans and pictures it is easy to gain an idea of the castle in the time of its strength. The plateau, on which the buildings stood, rises from 99 feet above sea-level at its seaward end to 153 feet at its highest point, and measures 266 feet by 88 feet. This plateau was cut off from the mainland by a chasm some 20 feet wide, which was spanned by a drawbridge. It was fringed by a curtain wall running round the cliff edge so that no access could be had to it from the sea without leave from the garrison. The picture of a crane and bucket, shown on the 1549 plan as swinging 100 feet above the entrance to the great cave, explains how communication was maintained with the sea; and this gives another blow

¹ M'Gibbon and Ross's *Castles*, iii. p. 222.

to the fascinating tradition¹ that there was a secret passage from the underground sea-cave into the castle above by means of steps cut in the rock through its heart. This cave was explored in May 1920, and was found to extend for about 80 yards; but no signs of any steps on its walls nor of an aperture in its roof could be discovered.²

Not much of the curtain wall remains, but fragments of its foundations can still be seen extending here and there far down the cliff face. All of it that exists now above the plateau level is a portion of the tower at the drawbridge entrance, showing a shot-hole window still entire, and another bit at the seaward end of about 12 feet long, in which a flight of steps gives access to the parapet.

There is little of the castle itself standing now, only a portion of the wall comprising the north-east corner of "the Halle"; and this rises to the height of the corbels. In it there is a recess, on the first floor, with a portion of a rudely cut old Gothic archhead in red sandstone which was complete when Mr M'Gibbon sketched it in 1880. There is a large mass of masonry which has evidently been thrown to the ground from the parapet of the castle, and completely turned upside down in its fall. In it are embedded eight old corbels, and it is marvellous that the mass was not completely shattered. The fall is said to have occurred during a thunderstorm in 1871.³

There is no trace of a spring or well within the castle walls, nor is one indicated on the 1549 plan, and the problem of a water-supply is one that is difficult to solve. There is, outside the drawbridge, a circular hole with built sides which, at one time, may have been the castle well, but it would have been dangerous to obtain water from it during a siege. Hector Boece tells of a wonderful stone which was in Fast Castle, full of eyes and holes like a sponge, hollowed in the middle, in which all sea-water washing therein at once becomes fresh and delicious to the mouth.⁴

HISTORY.

It is now impossible to say who was responsible for the origin of the castle. All we know of the builder is gathered from the illuminating remark of James the Sixth that "the man who built it must have been a knave at heart."⁵

During the fourteenth century the castle appears to have been sometimes in the hands of the Scots and sometimes in those of the English.

¹ For references to this tradition see Carr's *Coldingham*, p. 95; Fraser-Tytler's *Hist.*, iv. p. 286; and M'Gibbon and Ross's *Castles*, iii. p. 224.

² *Scottish Mountaineering Journal*, xv. p. 305.

³ *Ber. Nat. Club*, 1881, p. 445.

⁴ Hume-Brown's *Scotland before 1700*, p. 79.

⁵ Hume Brown's *Surveys of Scot. Hist.*, p. 186.

Formans of Hutton.¹ He was in command of troops at the siege of Dumbarton in 1489, appeared at a tournament in 1495, was sheriff-depute at Berwick in 1504, and died before Cuthbert, his son, returned from "Turkie" in 1510. If he was the same Sir Patrick who in 1463-78 is described as "Archdekyn of Tevedale and ner kynnesman to Lord Alex. Home," he must have been a wild youth in his time, for it appears that he, in 1463, with his brother John "entird and withoute any titill of right occupied the celle and lordshipp of Coldingham"² and excluded the Prior and brethren therefrom. No officer of the Crown was bold enough to serve a writ on these "masterful persons." William Barton, "messynger and mandatary of our haly fadre the pape," relates in 1465 that "Sir Patrick Home and John Home have ben abouteward to distresse every mandatary that takith uppon him to do or to execute anything against them," and "I dar nocht tharfore take uppon me for fere of deth to seke thair persons."³ He therefore fixes a notice to the doors of the churches of Norham and St Nicholas in Newcastle summoning them to appear at Durham on the 26th day from the date of the placard. No doubt they paid little heed to this, for they are excommunicated in 1467 by the Pope (a facsimile of the denouncement appears in the Surtees Society's volume on Coldingham), and they kept possession of the Priory for fifteen years.

Sir Patrick married first a lady whose name has not been discovered, and secondly Isobel Forman of Hutton, in Berwickshire.⁴

During Sir Patrick's reign, two events occurred in Fast Castle of widely different character. The first is a somewhat gruesome story, of prisoners being kept in confinement until they died. This arose out of the murder in 1500 of the Warden of the Middle Marches, Sir Robert Ker of Caverton, younger of Cessford.⁵ The murderers were the bastard Heron, Starked, and Lilburn. Heron and Starked escaped, but Heron's brother, the lord of Ford, with Lilburn and seven others, were delivered for him, and died in Fast Castle prisoners for that deed.⁶

The second incident is of a more pleasing nature, and the castle must have presented a gay sight on the evening of the 1st of August 1503, when Margaret Tudor passed the night there on her way to Holyrood to wed James the Fourth. Sir Patrick and his wife Isobel Forman received her at their house of Fast Castle, and we are told there was

¹ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, ii. p. 375. Those lands of Hutton and the keeping of Berwick Castle were purchased by Sir Patrick, and did not come to him with his wife Isobel Forman of Hutton. They were in the possession of the Formans in 1426 (*Reg. Mag. Sig.*, ii. p. 15), they passed to Sir Robert Logan through his marriage with Sir Patrick's grand-daughter, and their grandson, Robert Logan of the Gowrie conspiracy, sold them in 1597 to Sir George Home of Wedderburn.

² *Coldingham*, Surtees Soc., p. 231.

⁴ *Scots Peerage*, iv. p. 451.

⁶ *Border Calendar*, i. p. 195; and *Ridpath*, p. 481.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vii. p. 329.

"very good cheer so that every man was content." Her company were lodged four miles off in the abbey and town of Coldingham, "wher was ordonned Mett and Drynke for them, and also Liveray for ther horsys, of Hay and Otts ychon to hys Quantyte." A thousand Scots, of whom 500 were mounted on horses of great price and well appointed, had met her and her English train at Lamberton Kirk, and 500 of the English train continued with her on her journey into Scotland. When she left Fast Castle the following morning for her ride to Edinburgh she was attired in a rich riding dress and mounted on a beautiful white pony, with footmen on either side, very honestly appointed, with portcullises embroidered on their jackets, and "they schott much Ordnounce" from the castle walls. The story of her journey is delightfully told in the quaint language of the time by John Younge the Somerset Herald, who attended the queen for that purpose, and it is printed in Joannis Lelandi's *Collectanea*, vol. iv. p. 281.

After the death of Sir Patrick Home, his son Cuthbert succeeded him as owner of Fast Castle. Holinshed gives an account of Cuthbert, and of his return to Scotland from "Turkie" in 1510. He says: "Alexander, bastard sonne to the king, newlie made archbishop of St Andrews, came from Flanders by sea into Scotland and was joifullie received. The lord of Fast castell came ouer with him, who had travelled through a great part of christendome; and moreouer passing into Turkie, came to the emperour of Turkie at the cite of Caire, who reteined him in seruice, and gaue him good interteinement, so that he remained with him, till he heard that the liuing of Fast castell was fallen to him by lawfull succession; notwithstanding that when he departed out of Scotland, there were eight seuerall persons before him to succedd one after another, which in the meane time were all deceased."¹

It would appear that Cuthbert had to pay a heavy ransom before he could return to Scotland. "Seven and forty sacks of wool of the Lammermoors, each sack weighing about 640 lbs. troy, were shipped by his father at Leith, to be exchanged in England or on the Continent for gold to pay it."²

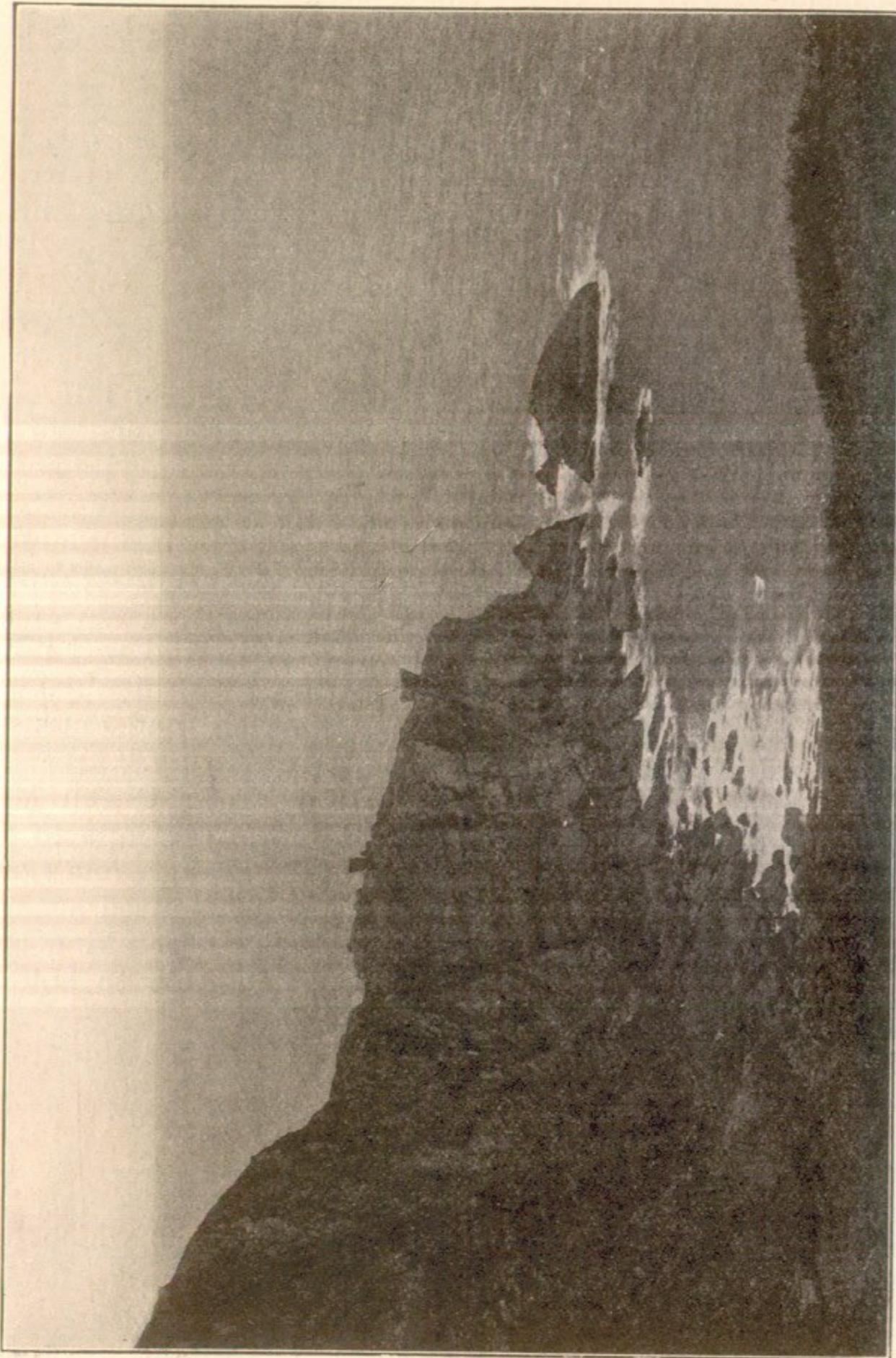
Cuthbert did not live to enjoy his succession for more than two or three years, for he died on the field of Flodden by the hands of Lord Dacre, who wrote to the Lords in Council (17th May 1514): "Cuthbert Home of Fast castell was slayne be me and my folks on the field of Brankston [Flodden]."³

In January 1514, four months after Flodden, there is a memorandum

¹ Holinshed's *Scottish Chronicle*, 1808 ed., v. p. 470.

² *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, ii. p. 161, from Exch. Rolls, July 1508-9, No. 340.

³ Raine's *North Durham*, p. vii.



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Fig. 7. Fast Castle from the East, June 1908.

showing that the captain of Fast Castle (unnamed) had been sent for in haste to consider how best to provide it with men and artillery, and the Lords being advised by him "ordanis ane pece of gret artalze be sent to ye said castell yat will brek bulwerkis togither with certane gun powdir for ye defence and kepin of ye samin."¹

After Cuthbert's death (9th September 1513), Alex., third Lord Home, the Chamberlain of Scotland, appears to have been in control of the castle—probably either as guardian of Cuthbert's widow and family, or as Warden of the East and Middle Marches. Although he was one of the nobles who invited the Duke of Albany to return from France, he seems not to have been long in quarrelling with him, and, as the following extracts show, this quarrel ended in his losing the castle. He was tried for high treason and beheaded in 1516.

On the 7th of August 1515, Dacre wrote the Council he is "sure Lord Home will never obey the Duke without Henry's assent, if he regards his promises. He victuals Fast Castle, meaning to do the Duke all the annoyance he can, and take refuge in England if compelled. His wife and the Earl of Bothwell, 'hir u[n]cle,' are in the castle."² On the 14th, Sir Anthony Ughtred wrote from Berwick to Wolsey, "The Lady of Fast castle³ still keeps it, and will not deliver it to Albany, who has come thither with a small company."⁴ On the 25th, Ughtred again wrote that "the Chamberlain had entrusted Fast castle to his brother, and has now given it to Albany."⁵

In 1515, Lord Home had arranged to capture Queen Margaret's children from Albany at the time of the Queen's escape to England, and to keep them in Fast Castle;⁶ but this fell through, and Lord Home was outlawed. Albany then took the castle and planted a garrison in it of his own. The Homes soon after succeeded in retaking the castle from the Regent, but, not being sure of being able to hold it, they levelled its walls.⁷

In 1521, George, fourth Lord Home (a brother of the third Lord) rebuilt the castle.⁸

In 1523, 23rd October, Ughtred wrote Surrey that "Albany is come forward. The Lady of Fast castll prepares for him. Expects the Duke this night."⁹

We now come to the time of the war (1543-1550) which arose out

¹ *Parl. Rec.*, January 1513-4, pp. 539 and 540.

² *Letters and Papers, For. and Dom., Henry VIII.*, ii. No. 788.

³ Probably Cuthbert's widow, Elizabeth Martin, who, in a charter of 1538, is styled Lady Fastcastle.—*Hist. MSS. Com.*, Hamilton, p. 218.

⁴ *Letters and Papers, For. and Dom., Henry VIII.*, ii. p. 219.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. No. 851.

⁶ Strickland's *Queens of Scotland*, 3rd ed., i. p. 118.

⁷ Carr's *Coldingham*, p. 88.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁹ *Letters and Papers, For. and Dom., Henry VIII.*, iii. No. 3460.

of Henry VIII.'s desire to compel the Scots into a matrimonial alliance between his son Edward and the infant Queen Mary, during which Fast Castle fell into the hands of the English.

We are told that after the battle of Pinkie (10th September 1547) the renegade George Douglas, brother of the Earl of Angus, tried in vain to take it, "but could not by reason of its strength, and the hardieness of the holders."¹ It fell soon after this, for Holinshed relates that about this time (December 1547) "they got also a strong fortresse called Fast castell, standing neere to the sea side, and placed a garrison within it."²

In 1549, the castle was under the command of the Marshal of Berwick, Thomas Gower (afterwards Sir Thomas). Gower was an active fellow, and even before the battle of Pinkie we find him harrying the Scots. He was out on the 5th September 1544 at Dawcove and stilled the same, took nine prisoners, burnt and spoiled the house, and brought much "insight gere."³ He was out again on the 25th, and took a cove in a crag of "Whitaderr" and seized Hutton Hall belonging to the Lord Home. At "Eales" he burnt abbey, church, and town, took 30 prisoners, slew 100 Scots, took 160 nolt, 120 horses and naggs, with only one Englishman slain.⁴

In 1547, Gower had been made prisoner at Pinkie, but had been afterwards released on paying a considerable ransom.⁵

The keeping of those insanitary and lonely little forts proved very troublesome to the English. The Earl of Rutland, who in 1549 had been appointed to be "Lorde Warden of the East and Midle Marches foranempt Scotland, and to have the chief rule, ordre and governaunce of our garrysons and men of warre upon those frontires,"⁶ wrote to the Lords in Council (14th October 1549) that "generally all men eschute fortes for the misery and sicknes in them, and, what by death and ronning away they can not long abyde in this state,"⁷ and (on the 22nd November 1549) the soldiers "are so naked that they run away, sicken, and die daily. If you do not out of hand send a thousand fresh Englishmen for their relief, the forts will be in great danger."⁸

The forts that Rutland had to look after and keep supplied were those of Dunglass, Fast Castle, Lauder, Eyemouth, Broughty crag, and Home, as well as the camp at Haddington. He wrote to his mother (8th August 1549): "The plage (plague) is sore in Hadyngton and allso in Barwyke; and even so yt ys in fere in my campe."⁹

¹ Carr's *Coldingham*, p. 61.

² Raine's *North Durham*, p. xx.

³ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, iv. p. 193.

² Holinshed, v. p. 552.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

⁶ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Rutland, i. p. 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, i. p. 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i. p. 42.

Somerset now seems to have suggested that "Faws castell" should be destroyed¹ and abandoned, and Rutland wrote (12th October 1549) that Mr Gowre desires that he may either "enjoye the house and landes thereunto belonging as his own, or els to be recompensed of his charges in obtaining the same, which (as he saith) amounteth to £120."²

Gower himself writes to Rutland that "wher as Fast castle is at this present under my charge it may pleas your Lorde-ship and Counceill to move my Lorde's Grace that the same may so conteneue, considering that it lieth verey necessarie and nere to Donglas, and also a most meate place for stowage of victuall and other necessaries to be conveyed frome thence by see to Donglas."³

Among the reports that the Earl of Rutland sent to London are some lists of artillery in the forts under his charge; unfortunately they are not given for Fast Castle in detail. All that he said is, after detailing those for Eyemouth, "like list for Fawst Castell." For Eyemouth the details are:—

"Two 'demi-culveryns' of iron, one 'saker of brasse,' one 'fawcen' of brass, one 'fawkenet' of brass, five 'fowlers' of iron, 'serpentyne powder, two dimid barrell,' thirty 'morriskykes,' ten bows, forty sheaves of arrows, with shot for the respective pieces."⁴

It was at this time that the "Platte of ffaws castle" was prepared.⁵

The castle did not remain long enough in the hands of Mr Gower to be destroyed by the English, for the Scots recovered it by a clever stratagem, as is related by the old historian Holinshed. The story runs: "When the capteine of Falke castll had commanded the husbandmen adioining, to bring thither, (at a certeine day), great store of vittels, The yong men there abouts hauing that occasion, assembled thither at the day appointed, who taking their burdens from the horses, and laieng them on their shoulders, were receiued (after they had passed the bridge, which was made ouer two high rocks,) into the castle, where, (laieng downe that which they brought,) they suddenlie, (by a signe giuen,) set vpon the keepers of the gates, slue them, and (before the other Englishmen could be assembled,) possessed the other places, weapons and artillerie of the castell, and then receiuing the rest of their companie into the same, (through the same great and open gate,) they wholie kept and enioied the castell for their countrimen."⁶

There is a very interesting commentary on this old story of Holinshed

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Rutland, iv. p. 192.

² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 192.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv. pp. 568-9.

⁵ There are plans also, of the same time, of Roxburgh, Eyemouth, Lauder, Broughty, and of a fort without a name in Belvoir Castle, where the original of the Fast Castle plan is preserved. —*Ibid.*, i. p. 38.

⁶ Holinshed, v. p. 561.

in a MSS. volume of Acts and Decrees, and I am indebted to Mr Angus of the Register House for telling me of it. This is a contract of 1553, from which it would appear that these "yoong men" were acting under the orders of Lord Home.¹ The contract is between "the noble and mighty lord Lord Hume on the one part and Robert Logane of Lestalrig on that other part," with consent of the Queen Dowager, the Regent Arran, and the Lords of the Privy Council, and shows in the preamble that Lord Home with his servants and assisters had recovered the castle from the English. In this contract Lord Home binds himself to restore Fast Castle within six days to Robert Logan, with all its doors, windows, and insert work in the walls complete, and to arrange with Adam Gray, James Galbraith, Thomas Dawson, and Mungo Lumsden to renounce the infestments granted to them for their part in the taking of the castle. For this Lord Home was to receive £700, £300 of which was to be paid by the Queen Dowager and the balance by Logan.²

In May 1547, that is, six years before the foregoing contract, "The Lard of Rastalrig" was appointed to have "the cure and keping of the baile of Dowhill about Fast castell";³ and he, a few months later, seems to have been living in Edinburgh with his wife, Margaret Seton, where they signed a charter on the 10th December 1547.⁴

There is something interesting about this Margaret Seton, daughter of George, fourth Lord Seton, and wife of Robert Logan, for in a letter of Lord Grey to Somerset (17th June 1548) it is said: "This news [regarding the movements of the French navy] is from the Lady of Fast (Faulst) castle, one of the 4 appointed to attend upon the young Queen."⁵ What are we to gather from this remark? It was her younger sister who was the Marie Seton of the Queen's "four Maries."⁶

In 1567, and for the next four years, Lord Home was occupying Fast Castle as his own. The explanation is that he had married Logan's widow, Dame Agnes Gray, and young Logan, the one who was afterwards accused of complicity in the Gowrie conspiracy, was then in his minority.

In July 1567, an incident occurred in the history of Scotland which touches Fast Castle. To understand its significance, we must recall that Queen Mary had surrendered to the lords on the 15th June, and was

¹ Alexander, fifth Lord Home, who was taken prisoner at Pinkie, released 6th December 1548, and appointed Lord Warden, April 1550.

² *Register of Acts and Decrees*, x. p. 160.

³ *Reg. Privy Council*, i. p. 73. Dowlaw was one of the seven beacons between Berwick and Linlithgow that were to be fired in the event of an English invasion. The others were St Abb's Head, Dounlaw above Spott, North Berwick Law, "Dounprender" Law [Traprain], Arthur's Seat, and the Binnie Crag.

⁴ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

⁵ *Cal. Scot. Papers*, Bain, i. p. 121.

⁶ *Scots Peerage*, viii. p. 585.

then in Lochleven. Elizabeth was uneasy, and dispatched in haste her ambassador, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, to learn what was happening in Scotland. A meeting to discuss the situation was arranged between him and a deputation from the lords, and this meeting took place in Fast Castle on the evening of the 11th July 1567. There were present Queen Mary's secretary, William Maitland of Lethington; Sir James Melville, one of the Privy Council; Alexander, fifth Lord Home; and Throckmorton.

Maitland wrote on the 8th to Throckmorton saying he would meet him near Coldingham on Friday, and lead him that night to Fast Castle, "wheare although yow can have no good cheare, yet, I dare well assure yow, yow shall be welcome."¹ Throckmorton then wrote to Cecil from Berwick on the 11th: "This daye I take my journeye towards the Faux Castle, and am accompanied with Mr Marshall and 200 horses to the bounderoode, where the deputy wardens to the lorde Hume, well accompanied, doe receyve me."² The following day he again wrote to Cecil: "As yow might perceave by my lettres of the 11th of July, I lodgyd at Fas castle that night, accompanyd with the lorde Hume, the lord of Ledington and James Melvin; wher I was intretyd very well accordinge to the state of the place, which is fitter to lodge prisoners then folks at lybertye, as yt is very little so yt is very stronge."³ He goes on to relate at great length the result of the conference. He says he found the lords were suspicious of Elizabeth's motives, and that they would in the meantime neither join with France nor England. When he assured them of Elizabeth's good faith, "the lorde of Ledington smyled and shoke hys head and sayd, 'yt were better for us you wolde let us alone then neyther to do us nor yourselffs good, as I feare me in the end yt will prove.'" The letter finishes with the words, "thus haveinge no more leysure, but compelled to leap on horsebacke with these lords to goo to Edinburghe, I humblye take my leave of yowe, from Fast castle."⁴ On the 14th he wrote to Elizabeth telling her he had reached Edinburgh on the 12th, accompanied with 400 horses.⁵

In 1569, Queen Elizabeth was annoyed with the Scots for having sheltered the Earl and Countess of Northumberland, the Earl of Westmoreland, and "divers others of the principal rebels" who had escaped into Scotland. She sends George Carey instructions on the 22nd December 1569, in which is narrated, "It is vehemently suspected that the said Earls and their complices will either be conveyed to the west coast of Scotland, where they may have shipping, to escape by the sea; or else by help of the Lord Hume will put into Fast Castle, there to remain till

¹ *Selections from Unpublished MSS.*, Maitland Club, p. 191.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

they escape by the sea on that coast. Which we the rather suspect, because we understand that the Lord Hume has of late victulled the said castle."¹ And Lord Hunsdon complains to the Regent Murray of this (9th January 1570), and says that the Countess of Northumberland has been received at Home Castle, "where she is yet, unless this day conveyed to Vaux [Fast] Castle, and that the Queen will make him [Lord Home] repent of his folly."² Elizabeth was not long in taking her revenge. On 4th May 1570, the Earl of Sussex writes to her: "Having appointed sufficient force of horsemen, footmen and ordnance convenient for the taking of Fast Castle where your rebels have been most maintained, the same was this day rendered before any piece was planted; wherein I have placed certain shot until your highness' pleasure be further known, finding that the Castle does not belong to Lord Hume, but is rightful inheritance of the young Laird of Lestarrike, now a ward, and son to the Lady Hume by a former husband."³

Elizabeth's reply (11th July 1570) to the Earl of Sussex's letter says, with regard to the retaining of the castles of Home and Fast, "we think it good that they be still kept and guarded to be at our commandment, praying you therefore to have regard herein for the surety of them. Using, nevertheless, to our friends there such persuasion on our part that they may not conceive but that the keeping of them is purposely for their weal, as the same shall so prove in the end."⁴

In June 1572, Sir William Drury writes from Restalrig to Lord Hunsdon of the "dissatisfaction at the Queen of England keeping Home and Fast Castles."⁵

Then follows some correspondence as to the ownership of the castle. Elizabeth writes to Morton (19th July 1573): "We understand that Fast Castle does not appertain to Lord Hume but in right of his wife, who (we are informed) did not consent, but was much grieved and displeased with her husband's doings in these matters against the king, and therefore by no reason can forfeit her right. Wherefore we must needs think, till we can understand reason to the contrary, that the poor lady ought to have good assurance for saving of the right of Fast Castle to her and her heirs, and some consideration of her living during the life of her husband."⁶

Morton writes in reply (13th November 1573): "The right which the

¹ *Cal. Scot. Papers* (Boyd), iii. p. 31.

² *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Hatfield, i. p. 459.

³ *Cal. Scot. Papers* (Boyd), iii. p. 149. According to Holinshed, iv. p. 243, Sir William Drury marched against the castle with a force of 2000 men, took it without firing a shot, and by agreement suffered the garrison of 10 men to depart with their lives. He left ten or fourteen Englishmen in it, who were thought "number sufficient enough to keepe it against all the power of Scotland, the situation thereof is so strong."

⁴ *Ibid.* (Boyd), iii. p. 206.

⁵ *Cal. State Papers* (Thorpe), i. p. 357.

⁶ *Cal. Scot. Papers* (Boyd), iv. p. 599.

Lady Hume may claim in it is only during the wardship of her own son by her first husband, the Laird of Restalrig, which draws near an end."¹

The castle was given up by the English to the Earl of Morton, who writes on the 13th November 1573 to Elizabeth saying he had "received the houses of Home and Fast castle from the hands of her officers";² but from a letter of 26th June 1575, it would appear that the ordnance of those castles had not been delivered "because it had not the King of Scotland's arms or marks upon it."³ The guns were "two 'merlownis' [merlins] of brass and four falcons."⁴

The young Robert Logan of Restalrig, great-great-grandson of Sir Patrick Home of Fast Castle, came into possession of his father's lands in 1576.

The Logans of Restalrig were an ancient and honourable family, with a claim to royal descent through a daughter of Robert II.;⁵ but, as Andrew Lang remarks, "their glory was in their ancestor, Sir Robert Logan, who fell where the good Lord James of Douglas died, charging the Saracens on a field of Spain, and following the heart of Bruce. So Barbour sings, and to be named by Barbour, for a deed and a death so chivalrous, is honour enough."⁶ They reigned in their eyrie above the little loch of Lochend in the parish of Restalrig⁷ for several generations before the castle of Fast came into their possession in 1533, though they had held lands in Berwickshire for many years before that date.⁸ Flemyntone, called Nether Aytoun, passed from a John Logan of Restalrig to his son John in 1495, and these lands passed from Sir Robert Logan to his son Robert in 1539.⁹

Sir Robert's wife, Elizabeth Home, besides being a co-heiress¹⁰ of Fast Castle, brought to the Logans half "the lands of Hutton and mill thereof, the lands of Bonyntoun with the keeping of the Castle of Berwick, the lands of Horndene, two husband lands in the town of Dunse, two husband lands and a kiln in the town of Lethem, the lands of Nesbetsheills with the wood thereof, and the superiority of the lands of Rawburn, with their pertinents, all in the sheriffdom of Berwick."¹¹

¹ *Cal. Scot. Papers* (Boyd), iv. p. 626.

² *Cal. State Papers* (Thorpe), ii. p. 850.

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 390.

⁴ *Cal. Scot. Papers* (Boyd), v. p. 156.

⁵ *Scots Peerage*, i. p. 16 n.

⁶ *James VI. and the Gowrie Mystery*, p. 150.

⁷ The lovely well of St Triduana in Restalrig was said to have been built by the Logans for a family mausoleum. The well was restored in 1908. See *Trans. Edin. Archit. Assoc.*, vii. p. 56.

⁸ A twelfth-century charter, with a seal of Edwardi de Lastalric, confirms a gift of two tofts in eimuthe (Eyemouth) to St Ebbe and the Priory of Coldingham by Robert, son of Matilda of Berwick.—Raine's *North Durham*, p. 40.

⁹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 647.

¹⁰ Alison, Elizabeth's sister, was the other co-heiress, and she married Sir Walter Ogilvy of Dunlugas. Sir Walter's son George is connected with Logan in a number of transactions for the sale of lands in which they had a joint interest. See *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, pp. 14 and 64.

¹¹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 222.

From now onwards writers on the Logans have made a grand mix-up in the names of fathers and sons and mothers and sons,¹ but when a sentence of the court pronounces that the name, memory, and dignity of the deceased Robert Logan be extinct and abolished,² what else could be expected?

In 1536, Sir Robert finds caution to the extent of £1000 "to underly the law at the next Justice-aire of Edinburgh for art and part of the cruel Slaughter of Adam Purdy,"³ but what came of this is not shown in Pitcairn. He was alive in 1542, as his son is then named "fear of Restalrig,"⁴ but he was probably dead before his son got the charter of the lands of Restalrig confirmed in September 1543.⁵

In 1542, Lord Seton acquired the gift of Robert Logan the younger's marriage from the Queen, which gift had at one time "pertenit to David Wod of the Crag comptrollar, and renuncit and ourgevin be him in umquhill our souerane ladyis faderis handis for certane soumes of money and compositionis payit."⁶

Soon after this Logan is married to Lord Seton's daughter Margaret.⁷

In 1547, he is appointed to keep the baile fire on Dowlaw by the Privy Council.⁸

In 1555, he is described by John Knox, who, in telling of the sale of the superiority of Leith to the Queen Dowager, refers to him as "ane man neither prudent nor fortunate."⁹

In 1557, he was one of the Lothian lairds who joined the Lords of the Congregation, but later "randered himself undesired to Monsieur d'Osell."¹⁰

In 1560, he was committed to prison by order of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.¹¹ He died in 1561.¹² His widow, Dame Agnes Gray, married [1568?] Alexander, fifth Lord Home.¹³

Robert Logan of Restalrig, grandson of Sir Robert Logan and Elizabeth Home, and son of Robert Logan and Dame Agnes Gray, obtained possession of his father's lands in 1576, fifteen years after his father's death. From this we may presume he had to wait until then for his coming of age. If we are right in this conjecture, the year of his birth would be 1554. He would thus be six years old when his father died, eighteen when he was with Kirkcaldy of Grange at the surrender

¹ See Carr, p. 90; *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 14; "The Summons of 1570," *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Earl of Home, p. 116.

² Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, ii. p. 291.

³ *Reg. Sec. Sig.*, xvii. fol. 27.

⁴ *Reg. Sec. Sig.*, xvii. fol. 27.

⁵ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

⁶ *Knox's Works*, David Laing's ed., i. pp. 426-7.

⁷ Robertson's *Antiquities of Leith*, p. 30 n.

⁸ *Scots Peerage*, iv. p. 462.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i. p. 176*.

¹⁰ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iii. p. 693.

¹¹ *Privy Council Reg.*, i. p. 73.

¹² Calderwood, i. p. 464.

¹³ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 223.

of Edinburgh Castle, and fifty-one when he died in 1606, "Old Rugged and Dangerous."

In 1560, the village of Restalrig, and doubtless also the Logan château above Lochend, were occupied by the English and Scottish troops during the great siege of Leith. Such stirring events must have made a deep impression on the mind of young Logan, then in his sixth year, and may have stimulated a natural propensity to lawlessness and intrigue which he developed to such an extent in later years.

In 1573, a contract was made between Sir William Drury and Lord Ruthven that if Logan was captured at the fall of Edinburgh Castle, he, along with others, was to be "reservit to be justift be the lawis of Scotland."¹ Logan was in Edinburgh Castle² at the time of its surrender in 1573, but he appears to have escaped this doom, for we find him in 1577 being surety, with others, to the extent of £10,000 that Lord Robert Stewart of Orkney shall remain in ward within the Palace of Linlithgow.³

In 1576, Logan married Elizabeth M'Gill, daughter of David M'Gill, advocate, of Lochcotes, Nisbet, and Cranstoun Riddell, and from her he was divorced.⁴ About 1586, he seems to have married again, for we find the Master of Gray writing to Archibald Douglas: "I was forced at Restalrig's suit to engage some of my cupboard, and the best jewel I had, to get him silver for his marriage."⁵ His wife at the time of his death in 1606 was Marion Ker.⁶ After the death of Lord Home his mother married the Master of Glamis.⁷

In 1576, Logan got possession of his father's lands,⁸ and in the following months he began to dispose of them thus:—A villa in Auchincraw to James Bour;⁹ a husband land in East Reston to Patrick Auchincraw;¹⁰ two husband lands, three acres in Hutsoun's croft, and a cottage in Eyemouth to John Gray;¹¹ certain lands in Coldingham to David Ellem;¹² one husband land in Duns to George Home of Ayton;¹³ four husband lands in Swonwode to William Auchincraw;¹⁴ his half of a fishing boat, eight acres, and five houses in Eyemouth to David Home of Nynewells;¹⁵ his share of the lands of Blackhills to Wm. Home of Ayton;¹⁶ the lands and mill of Huttoun, Bonitoun, and the keeping of Berwick Castle,

¹ *Privy Council Reg.*, ii. pp. 216-8.

² *Privy Council Reg.*, ii. p. 622.

³ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Hatfield, iii. p. 178.

⁴ Sir H. Hume Campbell, p. 79. In other documents the name appears as Marion Kie.

⁵ *Privy Council Reg.*, iii. p. 649.

⁶ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 223; and Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

⁷ Carr's *Coldingham*, p. 223.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Milne Home, p. 208.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Hay of Duns, p. 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Milne Home, p. 208.

¹¹ *Scots Peerage*, iv. p. 462.

¹² *Scots Peerage*, ii. p. 486.

¹³ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 234.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Milne Home, p. 238.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Hay of Duns, p. 63.

Horneden, Duncce, Nisbitscheillis, Rawburne, Auldhamstocks, Cokburnspeth, Schillistaines, Edwardsounes, and Lumsdaines, and his share of Acrasthland, Aittounes, Beapark, twelve cottages in Coldingham, W. Renton, Swynewod, Renton, Auchincraw, Swyneisfield, and Paxtoun, with the fishings thereof, to Sir George Home of Wedderburn.¹

A singular transaction is recorded in the Register of the Great Seal under date 13th May 1580, when the King wills that Logan shall pay, within seven years, a sum of £3380 to John Lumsden of Blanerne. He was cited at an address over the north side of the loch of Restalrig, where he commonly had his residence, and at the castle and fortress of Fast Castle, where he had his residence at the time with his retainers and family.²

In 1581, Logan complained to the Privy Council that Patrick and John Hume of Manderstown came under "sylence of nycht" to his lands of Nethir Byre and Flemyngtoun and "spuilyeit" 20 bolls of oats.³ The Humes protested, and said they were not within six miles of the place at the time.⁴

In 1584, the Privy Council order Dame Agnes Hume, Mr Thomas Lyoun of Balduky, now her spouse, and Robert Logane of Restalrig, keepers of the castle of Fast castell, to deliver it to the King's officers within six hours after being charged, on pain of treason.⁵

Six very interesting letters from Logan, written in 1585-7 to the infamous Archibald Douglas, who was then in London as official agent for the King at the English court, are printed in the "Hatfield Calendar."⁶ These show him to have been a man of considerable education, in touch with the social events of the day, and deeply steeped in the political intrigues of the court. They are too long to quote in full here, but it may be of interest to note that he gave a more pleasing description of James's grief on the death of Queen Mary than is to be found in many other contemporary accounts. He said: "His My. taks the daithe of his mother very hevely, and hes, for that cause, retirrit hemself to Dalkeithe for the space of ten dayes in quyet."

Archibald Douglas, to whom these letters were written, was, on 26th May 1586, tried for the murder of Darnley. Logan was on the packed jury for his acquittal which "absolved him most shamefully and un-honestly to the exclamation of the whole people."

In March 1587, Logan's rule over Berwickshire seems to have been extensive. Ballard wrote from Newcastle: "I hyred a messenger to goe to the Larde of Lesterrick for his safe-conduct, but after three days

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, pp. 64-5.

² *Privy Council Reg.*, iii. p. 419.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 649.

⁴ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iv. p. 837.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. p. 449.

⁶ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Hatfield, vols. iii. and iv.

absence my curreour returned with the report he was gone to Edenbrough to the Kinge.”¹

In 1587, Logan with three others finds caution in £40,000 for the Master of Gray that he shall within a month “pas furth of this realm” and shall not return without the King’s consent.²

In 1591, he finds caution that he “shall not reset or intercommune with the king’s declared traitors.”³

In 1593, Logan began to be in trouble with the law. On 12th February, having failed to appear to answer “upoun his treasounable conspyring, consulting, trafficquing, and divising with Frances, sometyme Erll Bothuill,” he was denounced rebel.⁴ In the same year, “under silence of the night,” he took, from William Nisbet of Newton, gold and silver to the value of 3000 merks.⁵

In 1594, his servants having near Berwick beset Robert Gray, a burgess of Edinburgh, and taken from him £950, “maist cruellie and barbarouslie invadit and persewit him of his lyffe.” Logan did not appear to answer to the charge, and was denounced rebel.⁶

In 1594, John Napier of Merchiston was called to his aid in a search for treasure said to be hidden within Fast Castle. Searching for hidden treasure, by supernatural means, was occasionally practised in those days, and the lurid description in *The Antiquary* of Dousterswivel’s adventures in the Priory of St Rule tells of the secrecy that was necessary on those occasions. Napier, with his familiar, a jet black cock, was more than suspected of dealing in the black arts, and he drew up, with his own hand, a contract binding himself to “do his utter and exact diligens to serche and sik out, and be al craft and ingyne that he dow, to tempt, trye, and find out the sam, and be the grace of God, ather sall find the sam, or than mak it suir that na sik thing hes bein thair: sa far as his utter trawell, diligens, and ingyne may reach.”⁷ The contract is printed in the *Memoirs*,⁸ and the original is now in the possession of Professor Glaisher of Trinity College, Cambridge. One of the clauses provides for its being destroyed when its conditions were fulfilled, and as it is still in existence, this raises a doubt as to whether the search ever took place. Mark Napier is unwilling to part with the idea “that the philosopher actually went to the dreary castle; that there, in his gown and cowl, he sat betwixt the wild Earl of Bothwell and the turbulent Restalrig, both armed to the teeth; that he partook of their ‘daynty cheir—fyne hattit kit, with succar, comfeitis and wyn’; and that the

¹ *Border Calendar*, i. p. 249.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. p. 679.

⁶ *Privy Council Reg.*, v. p. 148.

⁸ And reproduced in facsimile as well in the *Nat. MSS. of Scotland*, vol. iii.

² *Privy Council Reg.*, iv. p. 173.

⁵ Lang’s *James VI.*, p. 158.

⁷ *Memoirs of John Napier*, by Mark Napier, p. 221.

necromantic nobleman and the lawless chief bowed before the pure but mighty mind, for whom the destiny was yet in store to become the universal benefactor of science and the arts."¹

In 1597-8, Logan had some dealings with George Ker, the Catholic intriguer with Spain, and on whose person "the Spanish blanks" were found. Ker wrote from Calais (18th February 1597-8): "We haif delt with the skipper qlk. is John Brunne of Burntillund and hes agreit with him to land us at Heymouthe or Fals castle. We hope, God willing, ye morrow to saill."² Carey wrote (March 1597-8): "I am further enformed that he (George Ker) landed at a place called Coldinghame baye, hard by Listerickes house, a pryncipall man of that Papist faction. It beinge two myles of Eymouthe, and that as the shipp came alonge the quoast being right against that bay, he toke a bote, and came secretelie to this Listerickes house."³

In 1598, Logan seems to have regained favour with the King. A royal charter was granted to him of the lands of Fast Castle, Flemington, etc., which he and his ancestors had held of the Prior of Coldingham, now annexed to the Crown, for a yearly payment of 30s.⁴

In 1599, Lord Willoughby, in a letter to Cecil, describes him as a "vayne lose man, a greate favorer of thefes reputed, (yet a man of good clanne as they here tearme it) and a gud fellow."⁵

In 1599, Logan became bound "not to suffer his place of Fast Castle to be surprised by any of his Majesty's traitors and rebels or by foreigners and strangers, as he shall answer upon his life and heritage."⁶

In 1601, he reset John Burn of Coats, a pledge in the hands of the English, who, as Ralph Gray tells Cecil, "is with the Laird of Leystaryck in his howse at Faws castell."⁷

Before Logan's death in 1606 he had disposed of his lands of Mount Lothan and Nether Gogar to Andrew Logan of Coatfield in 1596,⁸ Restalrig and Quarrel holes to Lord Balmerino in 1604,⁹ Fast Castle to Archibald Douglas of Pittendreich,¹⁰ and the following disposition shows where the rest of his lands went:—

Robert Logan, sometime of Restalrig, with the consent of Marion Kie [? Ker] his spouse, disposes "the lands of Flemingtoun called Nather Aytoun, Reidhall, Nether Byir, Brownisland, and Gunnisgrene, with the corn and walk mills of Flemington, in the barony of Coldingham and shire of Berwick, to George, Earl of Dunbar, Lord Home of Berwick; and also acquiesced in the acquisition by the said Earl of the lands of

¹ Napier's *Memoir*, p. 223.

³ *Border Calendar*, ii. p. 523.

⁵ *Border Calendar*, ii. p. 583.

⁷ *Border Calendar*, ii. p. 762.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

² *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Hatfield, viii. p. 39.

⁴ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

⁶ *Privy Council Reg.*, v. p. 539.

⁸ Douglas's *Peerage*, p. 65.

¹⁰ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Stirling of Renton, p. 648.

Fast castle, with the Mains thereof or Wester Lumsden, Dowlaw and Doliolme or Cauldsyde with the mills in the foresaid barony, from Archibald Douglas, which he acquired from Logan,—4th Jan. 1606.”¹

THE GOWRIE CONSPIRACY.

The crowning episode in Logan's variegated career was his connection with the Gowrie mystery. Although in his lifetime he escaped the accusation of complicity in it, he must, if guilty, have had many an uneasy hour. Things all point to his living under the apprehension of some such tragedy; and this would explain the selling of the last of his remaining houses and lands and the purchase from Lord Willoughby in 1601 of a share in a sailing vessel then lying at Berwick fully manned.² As Andrew Lang says: “He wallowed in drink; he made his wife wretched; with his eldest son he was on ill terms; he wandered to London, and to France in 1605, and he returned to die (of plague, it seems) in the Canongate, a landless but monied man, in July 1606.”³

The truth about the Gowrie conspiracy,⁴ for the capture of the King and for keeping him prisoner in Fast Castle, will ever be an insoluble mystery. The partisans of the Ruthvens claim that no plot was devised by Gowrie and his brother, and that the whole affair was arranged by the King in order to get rid of the Ruthvens. Modern historians, after sifting the whole evidence, are convinced from Gowrie's falsehood as to the King's departure from Gowrie House, and other indications, that there was some kind of plot laid by Gowrie and his brother. But as to Logan's part in the conspiracy, that is another matter. It is now generally accepted that all the alleged Logan letters, produced at the trial and now in the Register House, are in the handwriting of Sprot. Andrew Lang, who has gone deeply into the question, is of opinion that the most important of them all, No. 4 of the series, is genuine in substance, and was copied by Sprot from an original by Logan,⁵ and that the others were based upon it.

If this be so, then there was a conspiracy on the part of Gowrie, and Logan was in it. Though, as Calderwood said at the time, “it was thought strange by manie that the Erle of Gowrie and his brother would communicate a purpose of suche importance to the Laird of Restalrig, a deboshed drunken man.”⁶

Much has been written and many books published on the conspiracy,

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com.*, Milne Home, p. 223.

² Lang's *James VI.*, pp. 218-219.

³ *James VI. and the Gowrie Mystery*, p. 161.

⁴ For the pros and cons see Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, Scott's *Life and Death of John, Earl of Gowrie*, and Andrew Lang's *James VI. and the Gowrie Mystery*.

⁵ Lang's *James VI.*, p. 238.

⁶ Calderwood, vi. p. 779.

so many as almost to form a small library in themselves. Most of the points in them have been touched on in Andrew Lang's book, so no more need be said than to recall briefly what happened on the 6th of August, 1600. The King, James VI., left Falkland to hunt a buck. After the hunt was over, Alexander Ruthven conveyed him to his brother the Earl of Gowrie's house in Perth. When dinner was finished the King was led, under pretext of seeing a man with a pot of gold under his cloak, to an upper chamber. Then word was sent to the party below that the King had left for Falkland, and was riding across the Inch. While his party were in the yard and mounting their horses, a turret window was suddenly thrown open and the King was heard shouting, "Treason! My Lord Mar! Help! Help!" In the scrimmage that followed both Gowrie and his brother were slain.

From the confessions of Sprot eight years later, it would appear that the King was to have been taken to Logan's house of Fast Castle, and that Logan was to be rewarded by a gift of the castle of Dirleton.

Sprot was Logan's "doer," and a notary public in Eyemouth. After Logan's death he produced a number of letters which he said were written by Logan to Gowrie. He alleged that Logan had entrusted them to John Bour, from whom he had obtained them.

These letters have been printed in full many times,¹ but I shall give three extracts from them which specially refer to the castle:—

(I.) "I dowl nocht bot M. A. (Master Alexander Ruthven) yowr lo. brother hes informed your lo. qhat cowrse I laid down, to bring all your lo. associatis to my howse of Fast be sey, qhair I suld hew all materiallis in reddyness for thair saif recayving a land, and into my howse; making as it ver bot a maner of passing time, in ane bote on the sey, in this fair somertyde, and nane other strangeris to hant my howse, qhill ve had concluded on the laying of ovr plot, quhilk is alrede devysed be M. A. and me."

(II.) "And the soner ve brocht ovr purpose to pass it ver the better, before harwest. Let nocht M. W. R. (William Rhynd) yowr awld pedagog ken of yowr comming, bot rather vald I, if I durst be so bald, to intreit yowr lo. anis to come and se my avin howse, qhair I hew keipit my lo. Bo(thwell) in his gretest extremityis, say the king and his consell qhat they vald."

(III.) "I think all matteris sall be concluded at my howse of Fa(st-castell); for I and M. A. R. conclude that ye sowld come vith him and his lo. and only ane other man vith yow, being bot only fowr in company, untill ane of the gret fisching botis, be sey to my howse, qher ye sall land as saifly as on Leyth schoir; and the howse agane his lo. comming to be quyet. And qhen ye ar abowt half a myll fra schoir, as it ver passing by the howse, to gar set forth ane vaf."

It is interesting to find, as Mark Napier points out, that these letters conclude with committing his correspondents in this nefarious

¹ See Pitcairn, Carr, and Lang.

matter to "the protectioun of the Almychtie God" or to "Chrystis haly protectioun"; yet he gives as a reason for excluding Gowrie's "auld pedagog" from the plot, that he "will dissuade us fra our purpose with ressones of religion quibilk I can never abyd."

Sprot was tried in August 1608 on the charge of treasonably concealing his knowledge of Logan's connection with the conspiracy, found guilty, and executed on the 12th of that month. From the scaffold he said that "his continuall beiring of company with Restalrig and Laird Bour, who was irreligious and without the feir of God, brocht him frome one syn to another."¹

Fast Castle was not used constantly by Logan as a place of residence, but he apparently reserved it for his more desperate adventures while he lived in Gunnisgreen,² near the mouth of the Eye water. It was at Gunnisgreen that his great Yule festivals took place. One of these, referred to by Sprot in his confessions,³ gives a lurid picture of Logan. The Christmas of 1602 arrived, and the Laird "keepit ane great Yule at Gunnisgreen," at which were present eight yeomen. "The Lady (Lady Restalrig) was also present at the table that night, and at her rising she said, 'The Devil delight in such a feast, that will make all the children weep hereafter'; and this she spoke as she went past the end of the table. And, after entering the other chamber, she wept a while, 'and we saw her going up and down the chamber weeping.'" "A fortnight later, Lady Restalrig blamed Bower for the selling of Fastcastle. Bower appealed to Logan; it was Logan's fault, not his. 'One of two things,' said Bower, 'must make you sell your lands; either you think your children are bastards, or you have planned some treason.'" Logan replied, "'If I had all the land between the Orient and the Occident, I would sell the same, and, if I could not get money for it, I would give it to good fellows.'" ⁴

In 1609 Logan's bones were exhumed from the grave, where they had lain for three years, brought into court, and a sentence pronounced on them as follows:—

"This Courte of Parliament Decernis and Declairis the name, memory and dignitie of the said umqle Robert Logane of Restalrig to be extinct and abolisheit, and his armes cancellat, rivine and deleitt furth of the buikis of Armes and nobilitie; sua that his posteritie sall be excludit and be unahle to posses or injoy ony offices, honouris, digniteis, landis, tenementis, rowmes, rentis, possessionis or guidis moveable or vnmmoveable, richtis and vtheris quahatsmeuir within this kingdome, in all tyme

¹ Pitcairn, ii. p. 260.

² The present house with its secret underground chambers was only built some 200 years ago. Logan's house has long disappeared, but the old building now called the coach-house is said to have been the dove-cot of the old house.

³ Lang's *James VI.*, p. 203.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

cumming: And that all the saidis gudis, landis rowmes, tenementis and vther gudis, moveable and vnmoveable, richtis and vtheris quhatsumeir, pertening to the said umqle Robert Logane of Restalrig or quhlikis nicht onyways haue pertenit to him at ony tyme, sen his conspyring of the saidis treasonable crymes, to be escheat and foirfaltit to our soverane lord, to appertene and to remane perpetualie with his Majestie in propirtie And this I give for dome."¹

With the death of Logan the story of Fast Castle practically comes to an end, and though it did not fall into ruins for another hundred years, what occurred during that time can only be of little importance.