

XVIII.—*Notice respecting Macbeth's Castle at Inverness, by COLONEL GRAHAME.*

COMMUNICATED BY H. W. WILLIAMS, ESQ. F.S.A. SCOT.

[Read to the Society, 18th November 1823.]

MY DEAR SIR,

Castle Street, Monday.

I WAS on a visit to a friend the other day, who, on looking among his papers, found a Description of Macbeth's Castle at Inverness, accompanied by a drawing of it as it appeared about thirty years ago. The drawing is very rude to be sure, but still it greatly assists the description. Both were done by a Colonel Grahame, who lives near the village of Duddingston; and supposing that this little account of the Castle might be acceptable to you to present to the Antiquarian Society, give me leave to enclose it in this note.

With my best wishes,

Ever your's faithfully,

H. W. WILLIAMS.

I shall not be backward in *my duty* when any opportunities present themselves of obtaining any thing that may be interesting to the Society, and I have no doubt some will appear soon.

To THOMAS KINNEAR, Esq.

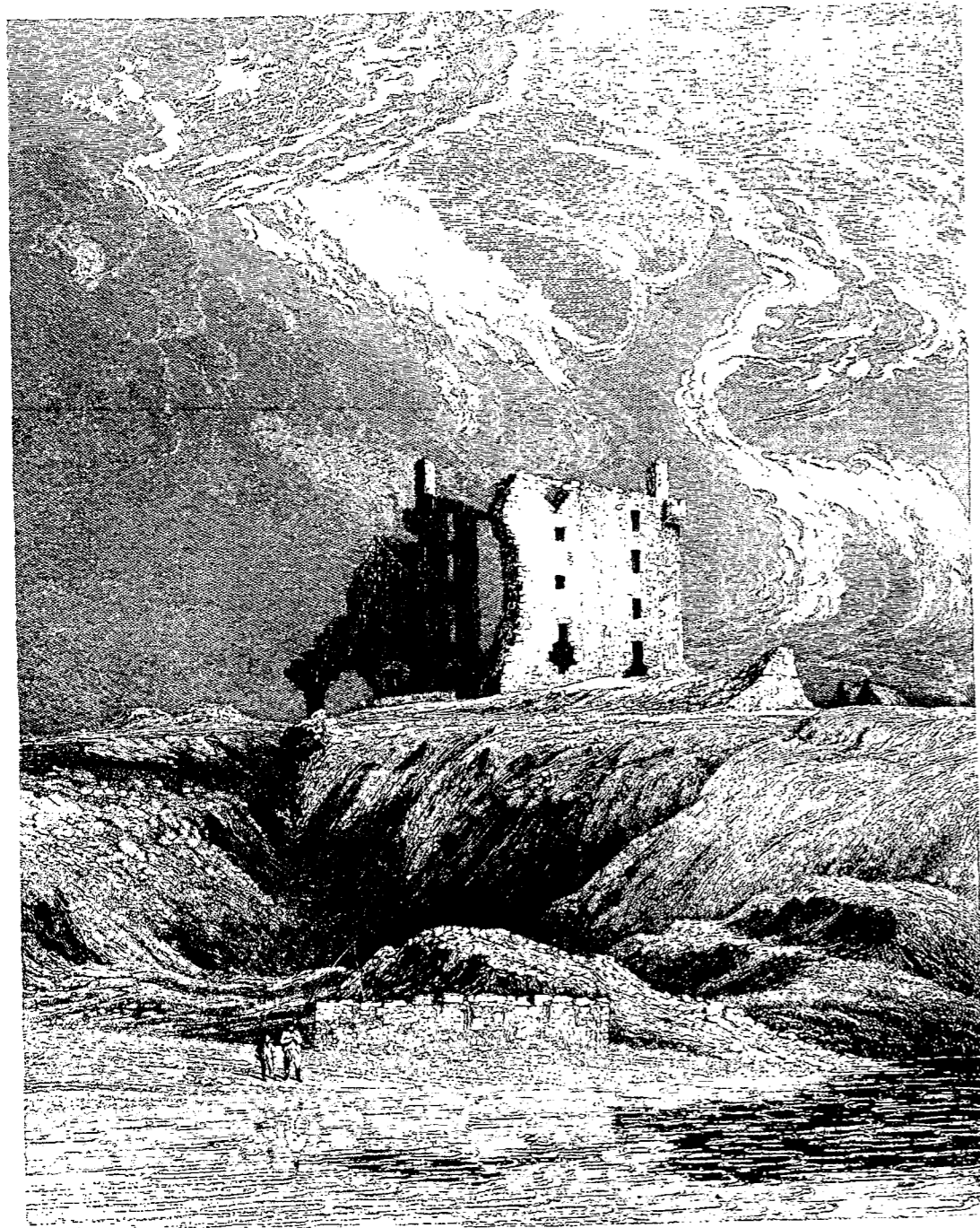
2d December 1822.

The accompanying attempt to shew what the remains of Macbeth's Castle at Inverness were, above thirty years ago, has no other merit than a tolerably correct resemblance. The view was taken from the south-west, on the west side of the river Ness.

What is betwixt and beneath the two chimnies, are the remains of the ancient Castle. The ground floor was vaulted; the upper floors were of timber; and the roof, when last inhabited, was flat and leaded, and surrounded by a low parapet. Within the north entrance a handsome stone stair led to the upper floors. The walls were of great thickness, and almost entirely composed of that mixture of lime and small stones of every shape, frequent-

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MACBETH'S CASTLE

AT INVERNESS

ly met with in structures of very ancient erection ; a composition which resembled one compact mass of hard stone or flint, appearing capable of resisting the impressions of weather and of time.

In each of the chambers exposed in the three upper floors, there was an alcove or recess, partially discovered in this view, formed in the thickness of the north wall of the Castle, of sufficient dimensions to contain a bed. Tradition pointed out the alcove, marked by the letter (D) as that in which King Duncan was murdered by Macbeth.

There being no authentic record of the fact in existence, our earliest writers now extant are not agreed as to the place where Duncan was murdered. This castle of Inverness, however, is said by some of our best Historians, and believed by tradition, to have been the place.

It is not intended to quote Shakspeare as authority to decide the question ; but it may not be improper to give his description, which, in some particulars, is so perfectly accurate, that he must either have been there himself, or have received it from some person well acquainted with the spot.

‘ *King.* This Castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
 ‘ Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
 ‘ Unto our general senses.
 ‘ *Banquo.* This guest of summer,
 ‘ The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
 ‘ By his lov’d mansionry, that the heav’n’s breath
 ‘ Smells wooingly here : no jutting frieze,
 ‘ Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
 ‘ Hath made his pendant bed, and procreant cradle :
 ‘ Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ’d,
 ‘ The air is delicate.’ Act I. Scene 6.

The lowest opening, shewn in the View, to the right, was a door, and may be supposed to have been the *south entry* mentioned by Lady Macbeth, when she says—

‘ I hear a knocking
 ‘ At the south entry.’—Act II. Scene 2.

In the reign of George II. a square was formed, containing a house for the Governor, and barracks for officers and soldiers ; the Old Castle forming part of the south side of the square, and being the Fort-major’s residence. There was also a chapel, and some other modern buildings, on the south side of the Castle ; and ramparts encompassed the hill along the river side, and behind Bridge Street and Castle Street ; the elevation of the Castle Hill, above the houses of the town, becoming gradually lower, in proceeding along those streets, from the river to beyond the south end of Castle Street, where the road from Fort-Augustus entered the town by an abrupt ascent on the south side of the Castle Hill, at which point of entrance the elevation of the hill was but little above the level of the street. A small portion of these ramparts appears at the side of the river in this view ; and the house to the right of the Castle is, or was, the southernmost house of Castle Street.

When the rebels, in 1746, got possession of the fort, then called Fort-George, a French officer, in the rebel service, undertook to blow up the whole, and began his operations with the venerable Old Castle ; but, from some mismanagement on his part, he and his dog were blown into the air, with a portion of the west end of the Castle, and their mangled bodies, falling into the river, were carried down with the stream. A fragment of the Old Castle fell upon the slope of the hill, and remained there, as shewn in the drawing. The reddish coloured wall to the left was a part of the modern additions, which were of brick. Piles of rubbish appear to the right and left of the fragment of the Old Castle ; and two portions of the debris of those modern additions appear on the slope of the hill, partly thrown there by idle boys.

That part of the hill to the right was covered with good grass—to the left it was rather bare and sandy, on which were dispersed many plants of balm, and the remains of patches of sweet herbs, planted there by the officers of the garrison.

J. G.