

XV.—*Notice regarding an Ancient Oak Pannel from Stirling Castle, on which is carved the Head of a King of Scotland. Communicated by Captain J. E. ALEXANDER, (late) 16th Lancers, M. R. A. and G. S. Corr. Mem. S. A. Scot. &c.*

THIS interesting Relic of the Scottish monarchy is now in the possession of the family of the late General G. Graham, Deputy-Governor of Stirling Castle. The General purchased it from an old woman in the village of Torbrecks, who said she had got it about 40 years before from the sheriff-substitute of Stirling; and it was firmly believed to have come originally from the Castle.

The pannel, five feet six inches in height, and two feet broad, is of oak, in a high state of preservation (*a*). The front is divided into two compartments; the upper containing, among florid ornaments, a Royal Head; and the lower the Scottish Thistle and Fleur-de-Lis of France, conjoined and surmounted by a Crown.

It is well known that the Palace of Stirling was a favourite residence of James V. After its erection in 1529, he was continually ornamenting and improving it. One apartment in particular, which went by the name of the King's Room or Presence Chamber, had a ceiling completely covered with oak carving. The great weight of this caused one of the pannels to fall down; and, instead of its being replaced, in 1777, the whole ceiling was destroyed and dispersed in different directions. A gentleman who witnessed this barbarity states that, on the day the ceiling was pulled to pieces by the workmen who were employed to repair the roof of the Palace, beautifully carved heads, larger than life, supposed to be of the Scottish Sovereigns, their Queens, and men of renown in the kingdom—among others the effigy of Sir William Wallace—were rolled down the streets from the Castle. Several bakers seized on some of them, and heated their ovens with them. Others found their way into the jail, where the prisoners amused themselves with bedaubing them with red paint, ochre, and other colours; whilst a few only out of many scores fell into the hands of those who appreciated their value;—and Mrs General Graham in particular not only collected all she could, but sketched those she could not obtain possession of; and her handiwork was engraved and published in a quarto volume, under the title of *The Stirling Heads*. The relic, the subject of this paper, is part of the *disjecta membra*.

In Johnstone's *Inscriptiones Regum Scotorum*, James V. is represented as a handsome man, with an aquiline nose and flowing beard (in fact very similar to the head in the plate, in which a helmet with an open vizor is surmounted by a thistle); and royal robes clothe the body. The union of the Thistle and Fleur-de-Lis in the lower compartment may allude to the marriage of James with Mary of Guise, after the death of Queen Magdalene, which took place whilst the palace was building.

(*a*) See Plate XI. Fig. 2.

The form of the Crown is very elegant. The lower part consists of a circle on which precious stones are represented interspersed with pearls. Over these a range of fleurs-de-lis are interchanged with crosses fleurées. This part of the Crown formed the original diadem of Scotland till the reign of James V. who, in imitation of the crowns of other sovereigns, added two imperial arches rising from the circle, and crossing each other at the top, which again are surmounted by a pearl and cross. On the large cross patée of the crowns exhibited in the Castle of Edinburgh are the letters J. R. V.; and from what has been stated above, there can be little doubt that the head on the pannel is that of James V. one of the handsomest, most accomplished, and chivalrous monarchs of the race of Stuart (*a*).