

XVI.—*Account of some Ancient Carvings in Oak; in a Letter from JOHN MACKINLAY, Esquire, Corr. Mem. S. A. Scot. &c.*

*Anstruther, 8th May 1830.*

DEAR SIR,

I WAS engaged last summer, along with the Reverend Mr Sime at Pit-tenweem, in making a plan of the Priory at that place; and, in the course of our examination of the buildings, the Right Reverend Bishop Low, (who lives in that part of them which was formerly the refectory,) shewed us one of the arched cellars on the ground-floor, where we observed what we supposed to be two old window-shutters confining a heap of potatoes in one corner. On closer inspection, we found them to be of oak, and the pannels cut into medallions, foliage, &c. The Bishop, (who was not previously aware of their existence,) immediately caused them to be taken up and cleaned. One of the medallions represents King James V. as the head is exactly like that on his groats. The corresponding portrait in the opposite pannel is supposed to represent his Queen, Mary of Guise. The other four portraits are not known with any certainty; but the two in the middle have been supposed to be the Regent Hamilton and his Lady; and one of those below, with the square cap and tassels, to be Cardinal Beaton; but the face is too feminine. The border of the medallion of the King is cut into a very rich wreath of foliage, confined by four bands; the others are surrounded by plainer borders. The loops of ribbons, by which the medallions appear to be suspended, and the ornaments of dolphins and foliage, are different in each pannel, although a general similarity of appearance is preserved. The pannels are all in a good state of preservation, except a small corner of one which was worm-eaten and broken out, as represented in the sketch (*b*). I compared my drawing with the Stirling Heads, and also with Johnston's Inscriptions, and Pinkerton's Iconographia, but have not been able to identify any of the portraits with

(*a*) It may be proper to remark, that this Head does not much resemble James V. as represented on his groats, which give him a *straight nose* and no beard. The bonnet-piece, however, represents him somewhat in the style of the carving, with a slightly *aquiline nose* and a short beard.

(*b*) See Plate XI. Fig. 1.

certainty, except the one first mentioned. Paintings are seldom done in profile, which makes it the more difficult to recognize the likenesses in the medallions. The Society, however, may be able to determine who they were meant for, by comparing them with the portraits in the houses of the nobility, &c. I have endeavoured to preserve the likenesses in the drawing; and believe they are pretty correct. Those pannelled frames seem to have been the doors of a cabinet in the Priory; and to have been executed in the reign of King James V. I understand it to be the intention of the Bishop to deposit them in the Museum of the Society; and I thought it might prove interesting to you in the meantime to have a drawing of them, with a description of the manner in which they were found.

I beg to offer my thanks to the Society for the honour they have done me in admitting me a corresponding member.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN MACKINLAY.

*Donald Gregory, Esq. Asst. Secretary, &c.*