

II.

NOTICES OF THE FUNERAL OF JAMES, SECOND EARL OF MURRAY.

By DAVID LAING, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

The tragical fate of James, second Earl of Murray, who was slain at Donibristle, by the Earl of Huntly, on the 7th of February 1591-2, is noticed by all the historians of the period. The account more recently given by Mr

Fraser Tytler is so minute and interesting, as might render any further details superfluous. In now submitting a notice of some circumstances connected with the Earl's funeral, my chief object, I confess, is to lose no suitable occasion of urging the Society to exert its influence to have the monumental brass restored which commemorates the Regent Earl of Murray. That any Public Monument, such as this was, should have been suffered to be removed or destroyed, during the alterations made in 1829, on St Giles's Church, may justly be regarded as a reproach to the inhabitants of Edinburgh. But the circumstances to which I allude are not without interest, as affording an instance of a barbarous custom of keeping the bodies of murdered persons unburied, as if crying aloud for long-deferred justice.

The death of this nobleman, and of Patrick Dunbar, Sheriff of Murray, who was then in his company, and was slain whilst attempting to secure the Earl's escape, when the house was beset, occasioned great lamentation, and "the clamours of the people were so great, that the King, not esteeming it safe to abide at Edinburgh, removed with the Council to Glasgow." To this statement, Spottiswood adds, what could not fail to have come under his own personal observation, as he frequently resided at Leith with his father-in-law, David Lyndesay, minister of the parish: "The corpses," he says, "of the Earl and Sheriff of Murray were brought to the Church of Leith in two coffins, and there lay divers months unburied, their friends refusing to commit their bodies to the earth till the slaughter was punished."¹

In David Moysie's Memoirs this is mentioned with greater precision, when he says, "Upon the nynt day of Februar, the dead bodies of the Earl of Murray and Scheref of Murray wer brocht over the watter to Leithe be the Lady Doune his mother, quha myndit upon the morne thairefter to present thame to the King; quhair of his Majestie being forseine, he past out to the hunting, and commandit the bailyeis of Leithe to arreift the dead bodies in their ludging quhair they wer, and suffer thame not to be transported quhill they knew mair of his Majestie's mynd."²

The favour shewn by the King to Huntly, who, with his friends, alleged that their proceedings were sanctioned by the Royal warrant, served to increase these clamours. Some steps, therefore, being requisite, on the 9th of March 1592, commission was granted to George Earl Marischal, to apprehend George Earl of Huntly, Sir Patrick Gordon of Auchindore, and various other accomplices, "for the treffonable fyrreraifing and birnyng of the place of Dynni-

¹ History of the Church of Scotland, vol. ii., p. 420.

² Memoirs, p. 90, edit. 1830.

birfall and murthour of umquhill James Erll of Murray,"¹ On the 18th of the same month a proclamation by the King was issued, enjoining that the young earl should not pursue the Earl of Huntly, in respect he, being warded in the Castle of Blackness, was willing to abide a trial, alleging that " he did na thing but by his Majestie's commiffion."² In May following, as we learn from the Treasurer's accounts, "there was paid 40s. to Archibald Douglas Mafsr. with letters to command and charge the Provost, Baillies, and Counsaile of Edinburgh to convene all and findrie the Inhabitantis within the said burgh upoun the twentie day of this instant moneth of Maij, and to pafs and burie the corps of umquhile James Erle of Murray in sik places as fuld be set down be his freyndis, under the pane of rebelloun, &c., efter the forme and tennour of the saidis letters."

Notwithstanding this peremptory command, (of which no notice occurs in the Records of the Town Council), I shall proceed to shew that the Earl's funeral was delayed for a period of several years. But, first, it requires to be mentioned, that, in one of the Border feuds, John Lord Maxwell had been slain by the Laird of Johnston on the 6th of December 1593. His body was brought to Edinburgh, and likewise remained long unburied.

The Privy Council were, at length, after an interval of nearly six years, induced to interfere, by issuing letters commanding these bodies to be interred under the severest penalties.

" *Apud Halirudhous decimo sexto Februarij anno [M.D.] lxxxviij^o.*" [1597-8.]

" LETTERS FOR BURYING OF THE ERLL OF MURRAY AND LORD MAXWELL, &c.

" Forfamekle as thair has bene diuers complaints maid to the Kingis Maiestie be certane of the miniferie anent the abuse quhilk of late hes crippen in, and lyke to have fund course and progres within this realm be exemple of the suffering of the bodyis of umquhile James Erle of Murray and John Lord Maxwell to ly samany zeiris vnburyit to the offens of God and selander of his worde. Thairfoir his Maiestie, with avise of the Lordis of Secret Counfill, ordains letters to be direct, charging officers of armes to pas and in his Heyne's name and autoritie command and charge James now Erll of Murray, having commendation of Sancteolme his uncle and the fadis erllis tutouris and curatouris. As alfua Johne Lord Maxwell, William Lord Hereis, and the said Lord Maxwellis tutouris and curatouris to bury, and caus the bodyis of the fadis Erll of Murray and Lord Maxwell be buryeit in the accustomed buriall placeis of thair predeceffouris twentie dayis next efter they be chargeit thairto under the pane of rebelloun and putting of thame to the horne. And gif thay

¹ Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, vol. i., p. 284.

² *Ib.*, pp. 300-357.

faillie, the said space being bipaft, to denunce thame rebellis; and putt thame to the horne and to efcheit &c."

In the view of ascertaining whether the Earl of Murray had been interred in the burying vault of St Giles or in Dalgetty Church, a search was made about three years ago, without, I believe, any definite result. Several of the members present may remember the inspection of the former by authority of the Town-Council, upon a request made by the family: and the disgraceful state in which the vault had been left, in addition to the unjustifiable removal of the public monument to their illustrious progenitor, afforded too palpable a proof that his representatives owed no thanks to the parties who directed or carried into effect the alterations on the venerable edifice of the collegiate Church of St Giles.

This examination of the vault was made in the month of April 1850, and the following particulars are derived from a notice written at the time by the gentleman who superintended the investigation on behalf of the family. The situation of the vault was ascertained without much difficulty, from information communicated by persons who had been present during the operations in 1829, when St Giles' Church was remodelled. It is situated partly below the west end of the present outer lobby of the Old Church, and partly below the west side of the pulpit, leading from the outer lobby to the body of the church, when entering from the Parliament Square. Upon lifting some of the steps, and working down to the level of the lobby, the vault was come upon. The form of it is long and narrow, the length running from north to south; and the width not being sufficient to admit of coffins being placed east and west, they were found to lie the other way. There can be no doubt that considerable alterations must have been made on the vault, and its space limited, but no precise information could be got to throw any light upon this point. Mr Philipps, commissioner for the present Earl, who made the investigation, on entering the vault found nothing but confusion, it having been filled up with rubbish and old bones. Upon the removal of some of these, three coffins were found, one on the top of the other. On the uppermost, which was made of oak, a plate was lying loose, bearing the following inscription:—"James Stewart, Esq., died at Rheims, in France, 7 October 1768, aged 22." The coffin immediately below it was a leaden one, the arms on a shield surmounted by a coronet, and the initials

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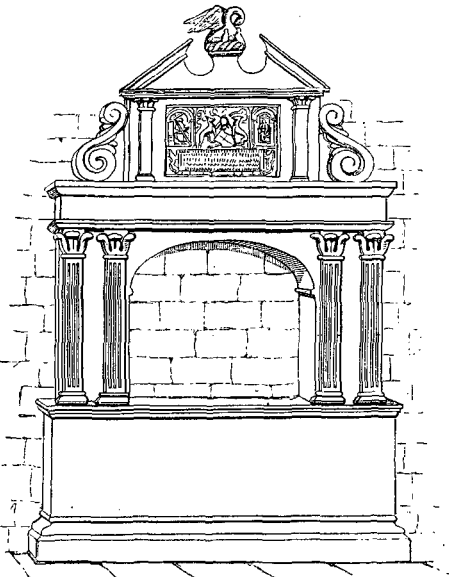
Nat. 8 Jan. 1670.
Ob. 26 Sept. 1690.

indicating it to be Alexander Earl of Galloway, who died unmarried, and was

known to have been interred in "the Moray vault." The third, or undermost coffin, was also a leaden one. It bore marks of considerable antiquity, shewing the rounded form of the head and shoulders, and in many places was much indented, but had no inscription of any kind, though it is more than probable there was such at one period, which may have been torn or rubbed off when the coffins were removed during the alterations on the church. A portion of the lead opposite to the face was broken, and through the opening was seen a part of the skull, the top of which had been sawn through, probably for the purpose of embalming, and the teeth in the upper jaw were quite entire. Though there was no way of positively identifying these remains with those of the Regent, still, from the fact of there being only three coffins in the vault, and it being clear that neither of the other two coffins was that of the Regent, there seems little doubt that this lowest coffin did contain his remains.

Were it necessary at any future period to have the vault opened, it could be more easily done by lifting some of the flags at the west end of the outer lobby.

No engraved view or drawing of the monument itself can be discovered; but being well remembered by many individuals, the accompanying sketch has been obligingly made by James Drummond Esq., R.S.A., to preserve some memorial of the style and character of the monument. A ground plan of the church, marking the position of the Regent's monument, and of the Marquis of Montrose's aisle, drawn by the Rev. John Sime, is engraved in *Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh*, vol. ii., p. 222.



Since the date of the above communication, we are glad to learn that the Provost and Magistrates of the city, with the concurrence of the family, have authorized their architect to report on the restoration of the Regent's monu-

mental brass in the church of St Giles. The original brass measures 32 inches in length by 22½ inches, and the accurate reduced copy which is here given will shew the elegance of the design.

In an original letter addressed by Thomas Randolph, the English resident at Edinburgh, to Secretary Cecil, the following notice of the Regent's funeral occurs. The letter is dated the 22d of February 1569-70. It is interesting as the testimony of an eye-witness to the great and universal regret that prevailed at this solemnity, for the untimely and calamitous fate of this most distinguished statesman and sincere friend of the Reformation:—

“ I dowte not but your Honour desirethe to knowe wth what follemnitie the Regent was buried, which I could not wryte in my other lettres for lacke of tyme. He was brought from byfde Lythcove to Leethe by water, and from thens secretlie to the Abbaye, vntyll the morninge, that he was brought by the Noble men to S^t Giles Church. The Bourgeyfis of Edenboure and Leethe wente before hym, next them gentlemen of the Countrie and divers Lords; then followed the Corse caried by the Earles of Morton, Marre, Glencarne, and Caffels, Lords Lindesaye, Glames, Ocletrie, and Rvthen; there caried his S[t]andarde before hym the La. of Graynge, and his Coate armour the Larde of Clyfthe, M^r of his housholde, bothe vpon horsbacke; his seruands followed hym in their murninge apparell, with as greate sorrowe as ever I sawe. Ther preached M^r Knox vpon thys theme, *Beati Mortui qui in Domino Moriuntur*. This is all I cane wryte hereof.

“ At Edenboure the xxijth of februarie 1569.

Yo^r Honour to command

“ THO. RANDOLPHE.”

“ *To the right honorable S^r William
Cecill Knight principall Secretar
to the Q. Ma^{tie}.”*



PIETASSINE VINDICE LVGET. S. IVS. EX ARMATVM. EST.
 73. IANVARII. 1569.
 IACOBO. STOVARTO. MORAVIAE. COMITI. SCOTIAE.
 PRO REGI. VIRO. AETATIS. SVAE. LONGE. OPTIMO.
 AB INIMICIS. OMNIS. MEMORIAE. DE TERRIMIS
 EX INSIDIIS. EXTINCTO. CEV. PATRI.
 COMMVNI. PATRIA. MOERENS. POSVIT.

Drawn & Lithographed by

W & A K Johnston, Edin'

MONUMENTAL BRASS, JAMES REGENT EARL OF MURRAY.
 (Size of Brass 2 feet, 7½ inches by 1 foot, 10 inches)