

II.

NOTICE OF ARMORIAL BEARINGS AND INSCRIPTIONS IN THE
CHURCH OF MID-CALDER. BY JOHN STUART, Esq., SECRETARY
S.A. Scot.

Having had occasion in the early part of last year to pay some attention to the armorial bearings in the church of Mid-Calder, I have availed myself of the opportunity of Mr Robertson's curious paper on the building of the church to throw together a few notices of them for the Society. These will be more intelligible, from the beautiful drawings belonging to Lord Torphichen which are now exhibited.

To understand their full import, however, it may be necessary to advert in the outset to an event in the early history of the family of Sandilands, full of interest and pregnant with important consequences.

That family, when the light of certain record first sheds its light upon it before the middle of the fourteenth century, is found settled in the little vale of Douglas, in immediate neighbourhood and close alliance with that mighty lineage of Douglas, of whom it has been written: "We do not know them in the fountain, but in the stream; not in the root, but in the stem; for we know not who was the first mean man that did raise himself above the vulgar." And we are led to believe that the house of Sandilands must have been growing in importance long before the first notice of it. Like the case of the house of Douglas, we find, in the first member of it who is known in record, not the weakness and obscurity of a recent settler, but the man of position and wealth; not the tiny fountain, but the powerful stream; for the first James of Sandilands known to us, while he got various grants of land from his Sovereign, received in marriage the hand of Alienora, the sister of William, first Earl of Douglas; and James, the son of this marriage, became son-in-law of Robert II. by marrying his daughter Joan.

The marriage of James de Sandilands with Alienora Douglas took place in 1348, and it resulted in the representation of the noble house of XIX.), is from a photograph, for which I am indebted to Mr Cosmo Innes. The pinnacles on the vestry (Plate XX.) are engraved from drawings by Mr W. Penny, of Midcalder, in the possession of Lord Torphichen.

Douglas becoming vested in that of Sandilands. For William, first Earl of Douglas, brother of Alienora, was married to Margaret, daughter of Donald, Earl of Mar, and by this marriage he had one son, James, and one daughter, Isabel. James, second Earl of Douglas, fell at the fight of Otterbourn in 1388, without leaving lawful issue. Isabel, his sister, also died without issue.

The earldom of Douglas, on the death of Earl James, in virtue of a special entail, went to Archibald Douglas, an illegitimate son of the "Good Sir James;" but his sister Isabel succeeded to all the unentailed parts of the estate of Douglas.

On the death of Isabel without issue, the succession would have opened to James Sandilands, her cousin, as heir to all the family estates destined to heirs-general; but, for some consideration which does not appear, he was induced to convey to George Douglas, an illegitimate son of William, Earl of Douglas, by Margaret, Countess of Angus and Mar, his right of succession to the Douglas estates, by a charter confirmed by Robert III. in 1398, in which it is stated that he had renounced all right of succession competent to him, after the decease of Isabel, Countess of Mar, to the Douglas estates. This George Douglas, who, on his mother's resignation, got a reconveyance from the Crown of the earldom of Angus, would also have been Earl of Douglas if he had been legitimate.

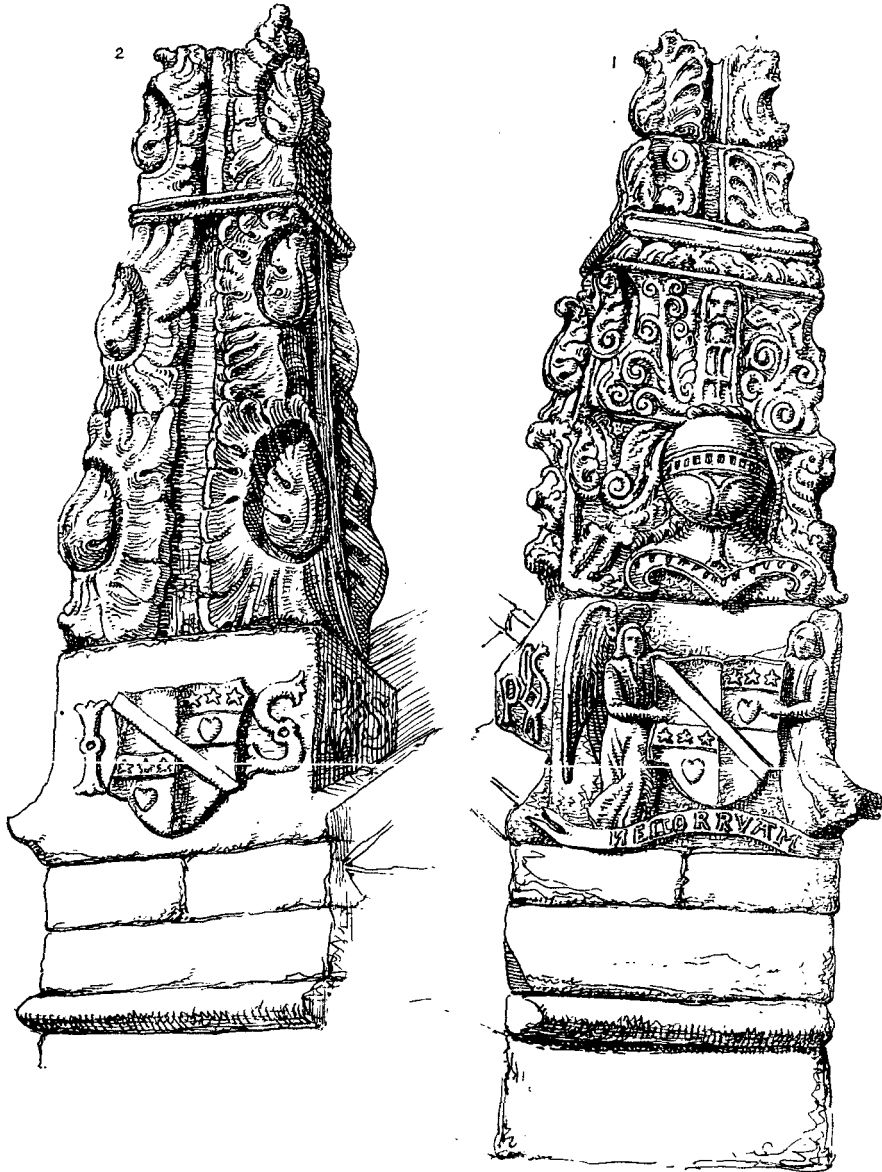
The issue of William, first Earl of Douglas, having thus failed, James Sandilands, his sister's grandson, became the heir-general of the illustrious house of Douglas, and this august inheritance is now vested in Lord Torphichen, his descendant. Since that time the family of Sandilands have invariably borne the arms of the name of Douglas in memory of their descent, although they renounced the succession to the estates. In the same way (says Mr Riddell—"Remarks upon Scots Peerage Law," p. 163) as the house of Winton [bore] those of the earldom of Buchan as heirs-general of John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, son of Robert, Duke of Albany, whose earldom they did not inherit." Thus, to a charter dated 6th June 1466 (at Calder House), by which John Sandilands of Calder conveyed to his eldest son and heir, James Sandilands, knight, and Margaret his spouse, certain lands in the barony of Calder, the donor's seal is attached, containing the arms of Sandilands and Douglas quarterly, with a lady for supporter, and a camel's head for the crest.

It will have been seen from Mr Robertson's paper that the church of Mid-Calder was erected by Sir James Sandilands, sixth Baron of Calder, at the expense of his uncle, Peter Sandilands, the rector of the parish. This Sir James was married to Mariot Forrester, daughter of Archibald Forrester of Corstorphine. He became an early adherent of the Reformed opinions, and he is spoken of in the history of the times in connection with the leaders of the movement, although he is frequently confounded, as Laird of Calder, with his son John, on whom he had conferred the fee of his estates in 1526. In 1558, a few years before his death, the Reformers resolved to solicit the support of the Queen Regent to a "godly Reformation; and for that purpose (says Knox), after we had drawin our oraisoune and petitionis as followeth, we appointed from amongis us a man whose age and yearis deserved reverence, whose honestie and wirschip mycht have craved audience of ony magistrate on earth, and whose faithfull service to the authoritie at all tymes had been suche that in him culd fall no suspitioun of unlawfull disobedience. This oratour was that auncient and honorable father Schir James Sandilands of Calder, knight."¹

As the church has been left in an unfinished state, it is possible that the change in Sir James Sandilands' opinions, and the general change of the religion of the nation, may have had some effect in leading to this result. It may be mentioned, that in 1526 he, along with others, got a remission under the Privy Seal of James V., for the slaughter of James Somerville, and in the following year he had a royal letter, ratifying "the licence given to him afore to pass for the completing of his pilgrimage at Rome;" while it is worth noticing, as a curious coincidence, that John Erskine of Dun, another leader of the Reformers in Scotland, while a youth, also killed a man, Sir Thomas Froster, a priest, in the bell-tower of the church at Montrose, as appears from the deed of assythment among the papers at Dun, dated 5th February 1530; and that he also, in 1537, had a licence, with his son and friend, to pass to France, Italy, or other places beyond sea, for doing of their pilgrimages, and other lawful errands.²

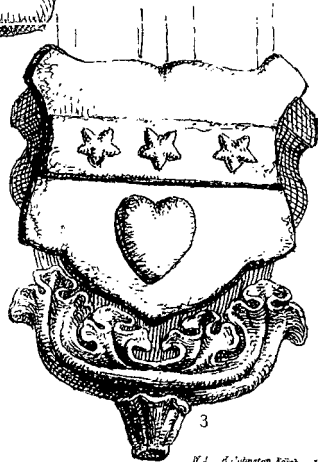
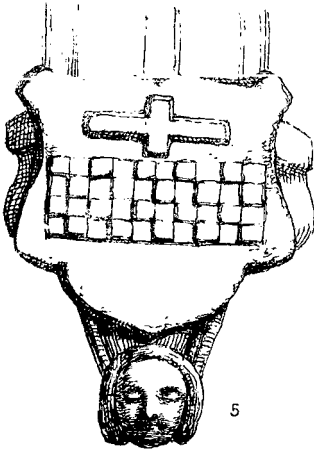
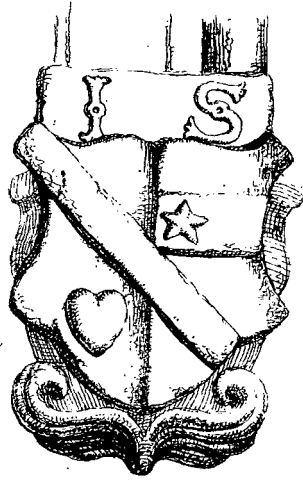
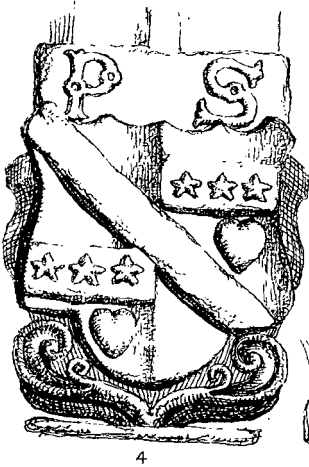
¹ The Works of John Knox, edited by David Laing, vol. i. p. 301. Edinburgh 1846.

² Spalding Club Miscellany, vol. iv. pp. 27-30.



PINNACLES ON THE VESTRY OF MIDCALDER PARISH CHURCH.

W. & A. R. Johnson, Lith.



W. J. A. Winton, Edinburgh.

ARMORIAL BEARINGS AND CORBEL, MEDCALDER PARISH CHURCH.

I may now proceed to give some account of the shields and inscriptions, and I do so principally from notes by John Riddell, Esq.¹

At the east end of the church is a low erection abutting on the apse, and now used as a burial vault for the Torphichen family. Its original purpose seems rather uncertain. It is surmounted by two decorated pinnacles, on one of which—a little to the north—is a legend “*PETRUS FÆCIT*,” evidently in allusion to Peter Sandilands, who contributed funds for the building; and below a shield “*NE CORRIVAM*,” Lest I fall. Above this last motto is a shield containing the family arms, Sandilands quartering Douglas, with two angels as supporters. On a side of the pinnacle is the word “*Maria*.” The opposite pinnacle exhibits the family arms alone, without crest or supporter—viz., Sandilands quartering Douglas, with the initials *J.S.* and *P.S.* at the side, the former referring to Sir James Sandilands, and the latter to his uncle the Rector. (See Plate XX., figs. 1 and 2.)

At the west window, and inside the church, is a shield, with what seems to be a representation of the arms of Sandilands and Douglas, but in an unusual manner. Here, as in old delineations (says Mr Riddell), the Douglas heart is uncrowned, the addition of the crown being modern. The shield is surmounted by a panel, with the letters *J.S.* inscribed. (Plate XXI., fig. 1.)

Near the west window also is a fantastic corbel, supporting one of the shafts of the proposed groined roof. It is in the form of a cowed monk, bearing in his hands a scroll, with the words “*PETRUS FÆCIT*,” with the Douglas heart twice, and the Douglas star once, on his arms and breast. (Plate XXI., fig. 2.) Near this window also is another shield, with the simple arms of Douglas, which, from its prominence and repetition, seems almost to throw that of Sandilands into the shade.

Near the east window is a shield displaying the pure Douglas arms, obviously to commemorate the representation of that family. It has this peculiarity, that the three Douglas stars are placed upon a fesse instead of a chief, as latterly and at present. (Plate XXI., fig. 3.) Another shield here bears the Royal Arms of Scotland, the shield resting

¹ The illustrations, Plate XXI., were copied from Lord Torphichen's drawings, by his Lordship's kind permission.

upon a lion couchant, probably in memory of the family alliance with the daughter of Robert II.

A shield near the east window contains the bearing of a fesse cheque between three cocks, two and one, being the arms of Cockburn of Ormiston. The families were allied by marriage, Sir John Cockburn having been married to Alisone, a daughter of Sir James Sandilands. This lady appears to have inherited her father's zeal for the Reformed opinions. She was alive in 1584, when Vautrollier dedicated to her a treatise called "The Confession of Faith," by Henry Balnaves, the MS. of which had been discovered at Ormiston by Richard Bannatyné, Knox's secretary.¹ Having been originally prepared for the press by Knox in 1548, it has been added as an Appendix to the third volume of the Reformer's Works, 1854.

Above the centre window is a shield exhibiting the family arms—viz., Sandilands quartering Douglas, with the letters p. s. over the shield (Plate XXI., fig. 4); and here also is a shield bearing the fesse cheque of Lindsay, with a St George's cross in chief, being the arms of Sir Walter Lindsay, Lord of St John, Preceptor of Torphichen.

This valiant knight is believed to have been of the house of Byres, and was succeeded in the Preceptory of Torphichen by Sir James Sandilands, a younger son of that Sir James who undertook the building of the church. The appearance of his arms in the church may indicate that he contributed to the erection of the building, but there may have been some family connection. His successor was his executor, and sues in that capacity in 1561.

A shield in the family gallery exhibits the bearing of the family—viz., Sandilands quartering Douglas. It rests on the head of a grotesque human figure, who puts up his hands to his head as if to help to bear the weight of the groining above.

On the north side of the church is a carved wooden screen, probably the back of a bench. The family arms are here represented, composed of Douglas and Sandilands, but Douglas has the preference, being placed in the principal part of the shield. Beside the shield are the initials J. S., which refer to James, second Lord Torphichen. I cannot distinguish the letters below, which probably are the initials of his wife's name. He

¹ Knox's Works, vol. i. p. 237, and note.

was first married to Elizabeth, daughter of James Heriott of Trabroun, and secondly to Mary, daughter of Gilbert, eighth Lord Somerville. In a pannel adjoining the shield is the date 1595, and below the letters R A W, which I do not understand. The screen is surmounted by the legend, THE LORD. IS. MY. SHEPHERD. I. SHAL. NOT. WANT. PSAL. XXIII. LEVE. IN. CHRIST.

Before concluding, I may just advert to the peculiar nature of the title vested in Lord Torphichen, as the only instance of an heritable dignity known in our peerage.

Sir James Sandilands, Lord of St John, having in 1563 resigned into the Queen's hands all the lands and baronies belonging to his preceptory, got a re-grant of the same to him, his heirs, and assignees, with all the privileges enjoyed by him and his predecessors as Preceptors of Torphichen. One of these was his title of Lord of Parliament, and ever since 1563 Sir James and his successors have been peers of the realm. In 1633 Lord Torphichen offered to surrender the superiorities of the lordship that were "in his handis undisponit, except that mean portion thair of lyand within the baronie of Torphichen, quhairin *does subsist* the title and dignitie of Lord of Parliament;" and this part was confirmed to him, and it was declared that "the title and dignitie annexit thereto sall remane with him and his successors according to the tennor of his auld richtis and infestments;" the last being the charter or re-grant of 1563.¹