

## I.

NOTICE OF A MEDALLION OF PAUL JONES, GIVEN BY HIMSELF TO MRS BELSHES, OF EDINBURGH; NOW PRESENTED TO THE SOCIETY, TOGETHER WITH THE PRIVATEER'S AUTOGRAPH LETTER, BY PROFESSOR A. CAMPBELL SWINTON, F.S.A. SCOT. COMMUNICATED BY COSMO INNES, Esq., F.S.A. SCOT.

The history of Paul Jones is now well ascertained. His name was John Paul. He was the son of John Paul, gardener to Mr Craik of Arbigland, and was educated at the Parish School of Kirkbean. He went to sea early, and while still a youth, obtained the command of the "Betsy" of London, a West India ship. In 1773 he visited Virginia, for the purpose of arranging the affairs of his brother, who had died intestate. About that time he assumed the name of Jones. Paul Jones entered the American service, being now about twenty-eight years of age. Though he had not been educated for naval command in ships of war, he had often sailed in armed vessels, and had received an excellent training as a practical seaman; his services were therefore eagerly accepted by the young republic of America. In organising their infant navy, Congress appointed three classes of lieutenants, and Jones was placed at the head of the first class, his first commission was dated 1775. He was assigned to the "Alfred," and on board that vessel he hoisted with his own hand the starry flag of America, being the first time it was displayed. In 1777, Jones proceeded to France, where he was appointed to the command of the ship "Ranger" of eighteen guns, and shortly after set sail on that cruise, which afterwards became so celebrated, from its reckless daring; amongst other adventures, was his attack upon the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, at St Mary's Isle, from whence the privateers carried off all the silver plate. The Countess of Selkirk soon afterwards received a letter from the privateer, intimating his intention to return the stolen plate, which promise he faithfully fulfilled. This celebrated Gallovidian afterwards rose to the rank of Rear-Admiral in the Russian service. He died in France on the 18th of July 1792.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Nicholson's History of Galloway.

The following note from Professor C. Swinton serves to trace the medallion now in the Museum with the autograph letter of the Admiral, which accompanied it:—

“I can tell you little about the medallion of Paul Jones beyond what is contained in the autograph letter from himself, which was presented along with it to the Society of Antiquaries, and which is, perhaps, the greater curiosity of the two. That letter is addressed to Mrs Belshes, whose husband was a kinsman of the Invermay family. She was a Miss Buchanan of Drumpellier, aunt to Mrs Graham, the wife of Dr Graham, our (late) Professor of Botany, with whom she lived during her widowhood, and in whose house she died (in Great King Street) some fifteen or twenty years ago. The medallion and relative letter were given by Mrs Belshes to my father—she being a Scotch cousin of ours,—and had been in my possession some twenty or thirty years. I believe the work is of wax. The letter explains that it was executed in Paris, and was sent by the Freebooter himself to Mrs Belshes.”

PARIS, August 29th, 1786.

MADAM,—It is with great pleasure that I now execute the flattering commission you gave me before you left this city. Sir James Stuart, who returns immediately to Scotland, does me the honour to take charge of the Medallion you desired I might send you. I am unable to say whether it is well or ill executed, but I feel it receives its value from your acceptance; an honour for which I can never sufficiently express my obligation, but which it will always be my ambition to merit. My respectful compliments await your husband. I am very sensible of his polite attentions while here.

May you always enjoy a state of happiness as real as is the esteem and respect with which I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

*PAUL JONES* 36

Mrs BELSHES, Scotland.