

III.

NOTICES OF THE CASTLE, AND PAINTED ROOM OR HALL OF
EARLSHALL, IN FIFESHIRE. BY A. JERVISE, Esq., Cor. MEM. S.A.,
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The Castle of Earlsall, situated in the parish of Leuchars, about a mile south-east of the church, is a good specimen of the mixed style of baronial architecture which prevailed in Scotland from about the middle of the sixteenth century down to the early part of the seventeenth. It is still roofed, and within the last few years some of the apartments were occupied by farm labourers.

Earlsall formed, at one time, a portion of the lordship of Leuchars, and there, it is said, the old Earls of Fife¹ had a residence,—a circumstance which probably gave rise to the name. It was known as Earlsall from at least the year 1497, when Sir Alexander Bruce (grandson of Edward Bruce, second son of Sir Robert, first baron of Clackmannan), and his wife Janet, daughter of Sir Robert Stewart of Rosyth, had charters of it

¹ Sibbald's Hist. of Fife. 8vo. Cupar-Fife, 1803, p. 417.

and other lands in Fife.¹ Sir Alexander died in 1504, and the inscription quoted below, which appears upon the chimney of the great hall, shows that the house was begun by his son and successor, Sir William, and finished by Sir William's grandson :—"Ædes hac extruebat D. W. B. an. 1546. extruxit tandem W. B. ejus pronepos anno 1617—D. W. B. : M.M.—contemno et ornamente manu." The arms of Bruce and Meldrum are here carved; and the initials M.M. evidently refer to Margaret Meldrum, daughter of the laird of Seggie, wife of Sir William Bruce. Another shield, with effaced bearings, and the initials M.M., is over the outer and chief entrance to the castle.

But it is the hall, with its painted ceiling, which is the most interesting part of the building; and, unfortunately, from the roof not being water-tight, it has suffered considerably from damp, some of the panneling being broken, and many of the decorations effaced. The room is about 13 feet high, 50 feet long, and 18 feet wide. The ceiling, a sort of circular, is lined with wood; it had originally been divided into upwards of three hundred compartments, in which were painted armorial bearings and objects of natural history, either in animals or plants; also figures representing the virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice. Black and white are the only colours used; and the Virtues are represented with the usual accompaniments, having the names painted below in Latin.

The subjects above named are introduced alternately; and the armorial bearings on the south half of the ceiling (so far as can now be traced), apart from those of the leading families of Scotland, relate to foreign countries. They are mixed up with the arms of eminent Scripture characters (the names being painted in Roman capitals), also those of Roman Emperors, and heroes of classical antiquity, as shown by the following list :—

DUKE OF OLAUE.	KING OF CASTILE.	. . . NAVAR.
KING OF BOHEM.	KING OF CYPRUS.	PRINCE OF P . . .
DUKE OF LORA.	KING OF NE.	I. R. (with Scots Thistle and
KING OF FRIELAND.	KING OF ARGON.	Crown).
EMPERIOVE OF RUSLAND.	KING OF FRANCE.	KING OF AIR.
PRINCE OF ORANGE.	KING OF DENMARK.	KING OF SUADEN.

¹ Douglas's Baronage, pp. 510-12.

On the north half of the ceiling, inscribed as follows, are the arms of—

DUKE OF SPRUSBE.	KING OF PORTINGAL.	ARTHUR OF BRITTAYNE.
EMPROIYR OF JUDEA.	KING OF JERUSALEM.	IOSOVA, DUKE OF ISRAEL.
KING OF SABA.	JULIUS CÆSAR.	IUDAS MACCABEUS.
KING OF SILITIA.	DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL	GODFREY, DUKE OF BUL-
KING OF FREISLAND.	CHARLES Y ^e MAIGNE.	LONE.
KING OF BOVLIOVYN.	ALEXANDER Y ^e CONQUER-	
KING OF ARABAY.	OUR.	
KING OF POL.	HECTOR, PRINCE OF TROY.	

Some of the names of the animals (which consist of representations of quadrupeds, bipeds, fish, &c.) are curiously set down, among which are the following, also painted in Roman capitals :—

DRUMADARIE.	APE OF ARABIA (with a	RAM OF ARABIA.
TIGRE.	club in paw).	OSTRAG.
MERTRICK.	CROKADILE.	SHOE LYON.
SPINX.	FERRET (chained).	MOYSE OF ARABIA.
PORCAFINE.	MYSKET.	RHINOCEROS.
GENETHA.	BEIR.	CAMELION.
VILD BVFFIL.	ASSE (with an ape upon its	HYDRA.
SIMIVVEPA.	back).	CUNAIQ.

But, perhaps, the most oddly inscribed are the representations of a sheep, under which the artist (having, apparently, no great faith in his own powers of delineation) has cautiously inscribed "ANE SORT OF ANE SHEP;" and the figures of a sow and pig, which are politely named, "SVYN BAIB;" i.e., swine and babe.

The names given in connection with the armorial bearings resemble those upon some of the medallion portraits which decorate the ceilings of the castles of Glamis, Craigievar, and Muchals, &c.; but these ceilings, which are nearly of a contemporary date with that of Earls-hall, are executed in white pargetted plaster work, which has a much more beautiful effect than painting. The ceiling of Earls-hall appears to have been executed about 1620, at least such is the date upon a compartment near the middle of it, which is filled with two united human hearts. Upon these are the initials W.B: D.A.L., which have reference to William Bruce and his second wife, Dame Agnes Lyndesay.

The latter died in 1635; and, according to the inscription upon her tombstone, which is preserved within the chancel of the old church of Leuchars, she "was charitable to the poore, and profitable to (the) howse" (of Earlsall).¹ I have not ascertained to what particular branch of the Lindsays this lady was related; but it is probable, from the allusion to her riches, and from the fact that the Bruce and Lindsay arms are carved upon most of the window tops of the castle, that she had contributed towards the beautifying of the place.

Besides the painted ceiling, the walls of the hall appear to have been covered with a number of maxims in Roman capitals, somewhat similar in sentiment to those in the painted room at Culross.² Unfortunately, most of the inscriptions at Earlsall are obliterated, and the following only are deciphered:—

BE MERRYE AND GLAID, HONEST AND VERTEOVVS,
FOR THAT SVFFICETH THE ANGER OF THE INVYOVS.

TRY, AND THEN TRVST EFTER GVDE ASSVRANCE,
BOT TRVST NOT OR YE TRY, FOR FEAR OF REPENTENCE.

GIVE LIBERALYE TO NEIDFVL FOLKE,
DENYE NANE OF THEM AL;

FOR LITTLE THOV KNAVEST HEIR IN THIS LYF,
QVHAT CHAVNCE MAY THE BEFAL.

. . . MAKE FEAST, AND BIGE, LENE AND CRAVE,
. . . SO SHAL THOV NEVER HAVE.

Near to this couplet the figure of a soldier, in the costume of the period, is grotesquely drawn in outline, with a gun in a slanting position, pointing to the entrance-door of the hall. The figure is about 9½ inches high, with beard and mustache, a frill or ruffle round the neck, and without any covering for the head. The coat has epaulettes, with stripes upon the breast and sleeves, and a broad ribbon (?) flows from the

¹ This lady's tombstone is embellished with a full-length, and rather grotesque female effigy, sculptured in low relief, and bears this motto:—"D. AGNES LYNDESAY, Lady of William Bruce of Earlsall, who in hir life was charitable to the poore, and profitable to that howse, dyed 1635, of her age 68, and waiteth in hope.—D. A. L."

² Proceed. Society of Antiq. of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 339.

left shoulder. The breeches are short and wide, terminating at the knee, below which there is a garter or band round the leg tied by a knot. The gussets of the stockings are marked out by triangular lines, which reach from the foot to about half-way up the leg; and the shoes are high-heeled. Over the door is the following quaint sentiment, similar to that in a proverb given by Ray¹:—

. . . A NYCE WYF, AND A BACK DOORE,
OFT MAKETH A RICH MAN POORE.

Several other traces of writing are visible upon the walls. Of these the following stray pieces, apparently of a religious tendency, can only be made out:—"Prayer to God is the only . . . meanes . . . to prepare . . . a man for . . . a wicket ane . . ." Upon another part of the wall are the words—" . . . yeldeth . . . e: bvt the . . . destroieth . . . er ovne hand."

A variety of carved stones, bearing the initials and arms of William Bruce and his "profitable" lady, are scattered about the castle and offices; and over a chimney, in the second flat of the house, are the initials W. B. D. A. L., and the date of 1635,—the very year, it will be seen, in which the lady died. Bruce, to whose memory there is no tombstone at Leuchars, is said to have predeceased his wife in 1631. Sir Andrew, his eldest son, by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of the brave Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, succeeded to the estates, and in his grandson Robert, the male line of Bruce of Earlshall became extinct. The property fell to three co-heiresses; and the succession ultimately devolved upon a younger son of Henderson of Fordell. Earlshall was sold some years ago to Colonel Long.

It ought to be added, that the old iron clock of the Castle, though now mute, and removed from the tower, is preserved within the hall, and bears the initials A. B., and the date of 1600. These refer to the time of Alexander Bruce, father of the erector, and embellisher of the great hall. Upon the bell of the clock are the initials H. C., a shield charged with a fess, and a mullet in the dexter chief.

¹ Ray's Proverbs, 4th edition. Lond. 8vo, 1768, p. 45.