

VI.

NOTICES REGARDING THE ANTIQUITIES OF CULLEN, IN BANFFSHIRE—ITS CASTLE HILL, AND PARISH CHURCH, ETC. BY ANDREW JERVISE, ESQ., F.S.A. SCOT., BRECHIN.

As the town and parish of Cullen contain some interesting remains, both of their ancient ecclesiastical and civil importance, and believing that some notes regarding these, and their history, so far as can be ascertained, may not be unacceptable to the Members of the Society, the following notes have been thrown together for their consideration:—

The most remarkable topographical features of the district are the Castle Hill, and the singularly beautiful and romantic situation of the parish church, and Cullen House. The two last-named objects adjoin each other, and occupy a corner or elbow of land, overlooking the burn of Cullen. Possibly the name of the district had originated from this circumstance, since the Gaelic words *Cul-a'en* are descriptive of the site. Or it may have been from two pretty similar words which are applied to places that abound in hazel or holly bushes. Of hazel there is no lack in the locality, nor is it destitute of the holly.

From the Castle-hill, which is conical in form, and about two hundred feet above sea-level, fine views of the hills of Sutherland and Caithness are obtained, as well as of the old royal hunting fields of the Boyne and the Enzie. Indeed, the hill may be said to be in the midst of these forests; and the Seatown of Cullen, which lies under the shadow of the hill, is built along the margin of a nicely sheltered bay.

Taking into account the commanding position of the Castle-hill, its proximity to the sea and to the neighbouring forests, few places could have been better suited for the abode of our ancient kings or chieftains than Cullen.

As in similar cases the town of Cullen had risen under the influence of the old lords of the district; and although there was a stronghold or fort upon the hill at a remote date, no record or tradition either of it or its occupiers have come down to us prior to the eleventh century. The ditches and trenches are still pretty entire; and although traces of the old masonry are slender, enough remains to show that the fort had been

of a somewhat similar construction to the castles of Kinedard (King Edward) and Elgin, &c., which were both occupied by King Edward in 1296.

Modern additions, in the shape of seats or benches, have been incorporated with the old walls ; and the spot has been made the depository of fragments of carved stones. One piece exhibits the Virgin and the Infant Jesus—the cognizance of the burgh ; another (possibly the head of the cross of the old town of Cullen), shows a unicorn resting one paw upon a scroll ; upon the front of the scroll are W. M. in monogram, probably the initials of William and Mary of Orange. Other slabs bear (1), the royal arms of Scotland, France, and Ireland, with the usual supporters, &c. ; (2), the Sinclair ; (3), the Ogilvy ; and (4), the Baird coats. A fifth slab is dated 1688, and initialed M. P. O., D. E. P. It is just possible that these fragments, or some of them at least, had ornamented the tolbooth, or town-house, which, along with the cross, stood about the middle of the old town of Cullen, near the church,¹ and had been rescued at the time the old town was removed to the sea side. It is certain that the kirk bell, which is inscribed, “ CULLEN, IN THE COUNTY OF BANFF, 1752,” was at one time upon the old town-house.

The earliest historical incident regarding Cullen is that of the landing of the Danes and Norwegians, their defeat by King Indulf, his slaughter by a band of Northmen who escaped from the field of battle, and his burial, first at Cullen, then at Iona, as told by Boethius,² and repeated by subsequent writers. But, according to St Berchan, who is accounted a more trustworthy historian, Indulf, who succeeded his father as King of the Picts in the year 954, expired quietly, after a reign of eight or nine years, at St Andrews, “ in the house of the same pure apostle where his father died.”³

According to local tradition, three kings fell in the engagement referred to, and one was buried at the foot of each of three isolated rocks on the sea beach of Cullen, not far from the site of the ancient Church of the Blessed Virgin at Farskan. These rocks are known as the *Three Kings of Cullen*, a name which had more probably arisen from the

¹ Antiq. of Abd. and Banff, ii. 136.

² Scot. Historiæ, lib. x. fol. cexxviii. (orig. edit., 1526).

³ Skene's Chrons. of the Picts and Scots, p. cxlii.

similarity of the name of *Cullen* to *Cologne*, in Prussia, of the cathedral of which city the Three Kings were patrons, than from the rocks having been the burial-places of the royal personages referred to by tradition.

As a town and burgh, Cullen has claim to considerable antiquity. As far back as 1198-99, King William the Lion granted a toft in the *burgh* of Invercullan to Richard, Bishop of Moray.¹

Whether King William ever abode at Cullen is uncertain; but from at least two of the charters of his successor having been granted "apud Innerculen," and attested by his officers of state, there is little doubt but Alexander II. and his court were there on 3d January 1226, and on 5th and 7th October 1232.² It was soon after the first of these dates that Alexander made over a portion of the territory in the forest of Invercullan to the Bishop and Chapter of Moray.³

It also appears that in 1264, R. de Strathewan, sheriff of Banff, expended, on the king's behalf, a certain sum of money on the repair of the house, &c., of "Innerculan."⁴ And it is not the least interesting fact to know, that after the unfortunate death of Alexander III., when the Abbot of Welbec and Henry of Rye went to Norway by order of King Edward in 1290, they stopped at "Colane" upon the 15th of October, and incurred 3s. 3d. of expenses there.⁵ Cullen is also mentioned in connection with the disasters that befel Scotland upon the death of "the Maiden of Norway," in so far as King Edward, when on his subjugating tour through the kingdom in 1296, passed from the castle of Banff to the manor of Cullen, on Monday, 23d July, where he abode for the night.⁶

But it is not easy to determine whether King Alexander and King Edward dwelt in the castle which stood upon the summit of the hill, or in an old residence, which is said to have been near the present site of Cullen House. Most probably it was within the castle.

The cause of Edward's stay at Cullen is well known, and Kings Alexander II. and III., had possibly been attracted to the district from the rich sport which was afforded by the surrounding forests. The fame of these was carried across the border by Hardyng the Chronicler, who, in his report upon the state of Scotland to Edward IV., held out the rich-

¹ Reg. Ep. Moraviensis, p. 11.

³ Ibid., 31.

⁵ Stevenson's Hist. Docts. (Scot.), i. 184.

² Ibid., 28, 123.

⁴ Chamb. Rolls, i. p. 14.

⁶ Ibid., ii. 29.

ness of the forests of "Boyne and Hayng, on the Este see coste,"¹ in that particular, as an inducement for Edward to invade the kingdom.

Of the keeper, or constableness of the Castle of Cullen, I have seen no mention until the time of David II., when it was held by Thomas Lipp, who also held certain lands in Banffshire, possibly in virtue of his office. During the same reign the lands of Castlefield—apparently the field in which the Castlehill is situated—were in the hands of various persons and at different times; among others, Henry Culane,² who, being a vassal of the overlord, had likely assumed, as was then the custom, his surname from his possession.

As before remarked, the old town or burgh of Cullen stood near the church. No trace of it now exists. It was "pitifullie" plundered by Montrose's soldiers in February 1645, owing, doubtless, to Lord Findlater being "a grite covenantar," and in May thereafter it was "brynt wp." The place of Cullen of Boyne was also plundered by Montrose on the first occasion; and, but for the payment of 5000 merks and the entreaties of Lady Findlater (her husband "haueing fled south," and left her to the tender mercies of the insurgents!) "the place" would have been subjected to the same fate.³

The House of Cullen has been recently repaired and enlarged at a great expense by the Earl of Seafield. Upon the older portion of the building are some half-obliterated carvings of armorial bearings. The oldest of these exhibits the initials, S. V. O. and D. M. D. These seem to refer to Sir Walter Ogilvy of Findlater and his second wife, Mary Douglas, of the house of Morton; and proves that Sir Walter, who was created Earl of Deskford in 1616, had erected the oldest existing portion of Cullen House sometime before he was ennobled.

Upon later parts of the house are the arms of the Stewarts of Lorne and the Meldrums, with the names of "DAVID STEWART & MARY MELDRUM." Other carvings, such as those of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, are represented with their ordinary accompaniments and legends, as noticed in Proceedings, vol. iv., p. 588.

Close to the mansion-house stands the

¹ Gough's Brit. Topog., ii. 581; Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, i. 405.

² Robertson's Index, pp. 32, 37.

³ Spalding's Troubles, ii. 450, 451.

CHURCH OF CULLEN,

which was "a chapel" in 1236.¹ It is said to have remained in that condition, and to have been dependent upon the kirk of Fordyce until 1616, when the district was made into a separate parish, possibly by the Earl of Deskford.

The church or chapel of Invercullen is commonly said to have been founded by Robert the Bruce; but the above reference shows that it existed long before Bruce was born. It is further said (possibly with truth, for I have seen no record to the contrary), that Bruce's "Queen Elizabeth's bowels" were buried at Cullen,² she having died there, probably when on her way from the shrine of St Duthac at Tain; and that for praying for her soul the king endowed a chaplaincy in the church of St Mary of Cullen. Fordun makes no mention of the queen having died at Cullen, but says that her body was laid in the choir of the kirk of Dunfermline, where that of the king was subsequently buried.³

As it now stands, the church of Cullen is cruciform in shape. It has been frequently added to and altered. The oldest portions are the south aisle, and the east end, the latter of which, from the armorial bearings, &c., upon the outer wall, and the old monument inside, had probably been erected by Alexander Ogilvy, who died in 1554, and his lady, Elizabeth Gordon.

Besides the chapel or church of Cullen, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, there was a chaplaincy within it dedicated to St Ann. The fact of the existence of this foundation, as well as the name of the founder, and a variety of other interesting particulars connected with it, are recorded by contemporary inscriptions cut upon different parts of the south aisle.

The first quoted inscription is from the arch of a recess tomb on the west side of the aisle. It is carved in raised and prettily formed capitals, and accompanied by a craftsman's mark. The mark (here represented) is three times repeated upon the aisle:—

¹ Reg. Ep. Morav., 21.

² Coll. Abdn. and Banff, i. 210; Old Stat. Acct., xii. 153.

³ Scotichron., ii. 288.

IHON . HAY . LORD . OF . FORESTBOÑ . AŽE . & . TOLIBOVIL .
 GVDSIR . TO . ELEN . HAY . Y^r . BIGIT . YIS . ILE . LEFT . A . CHAPLARI .
 HEIR . TO . SING . PERSONALI . OF . HIS . LĀDIS . OF . ORDIHVF .



Forestboñ, *Aže*, and *Tolibovil*, mentioned in the above inscription, appear to have reference, the first to the Forest of Boyne (? *Abhan*, a place abounding in streams), which lay between Banff and Portsoy; the second, to the Enzie (? *Eanach*, a marshy district), between Cullen and Fochabers; and the third, to Tilibody (? *Tily-bo-dubh*, the cow's black hill) in Clackmannanshire. These points are proved by the fact that when Alexander Seton of Gordon (first Earl of Huntly) married the heiress of Sir John Hay of Tilibody, he received along with his wife the lands of Tilibody, also those of the Anzie, or Enzie, and the Boyne in Banffshire.¹

The first of the Hays who held property in this quarter appears to have been John of Tolyboyll, who, by charter dated at Aberdeen, on 16th January 1362, received the whole lands from the water of Spey to the burn of Tynot, which are described as lying in the forest of Aunie. It was probably John's son, David Hay, who, about 1390–1406, had a charter from Robert III. of "the place of Cullen."²

The next quoted inscription not only presents the important and interesting facts of the name of the chaplainry, the extent of the gift, and the services required, but also the names of the founder of the chaplainry and the persons to be prayed for, together with those in whom the patronage of the living was to be vested after the decease of the heirs of the donor. It is carved round the arch of the large window of the south aisle, in the same style as the above inscription :—

SANT · ANIS · CHAPLAN · HEIR · DOTAT · Y^r · 35 (?) · ACRE · GVD ·
 CROFT · LĀD · IN · CULĀ · & · TENEMENTIS · SAL · BE · A' · GVDE · SINGAR ·
 OF · HALI · LIF · BVT · ODIR · SERVICE · & · DAELI · RESIDENT · TO ·
 PRAIE · FOR · ELEN · HAY · & · HIR · BARNIS · HIS · FYIV · DŌRS · AT ·
 GIFT · OF · ION · DVF · & · HIS · ARIS · OF · MADAVAT · & · FALING ·
 YAROF · AT · GIFT · OF · YE · BALZEIS · AND · CŌMVNITIE · OF · COLĀ ·

¹ Douglas' Bar., p. 167.

² Reg. Mag. Sigill., p. 24; Robertson's Index, p. 141.

The words—PER · ELENA · HAY—are carved upon the lower side of one of the stones of the arch of the south window. Upon the west side of the arch is this notice of the building of the aisle :—

· · · · · ELENGE · HAY · IŌN · DVFFIS · MODR · OF · MALDAVAT ·
YAT · MAID · YIS · ISLE · YE · CHAPLANRI · · · · ·

The two inscriptions last quoted prove an early marriage between the Hays and the Duffs, and also show that Elen Hay was the mother of John Duff of Muldavit, who died in 1404, to whom, until 1792, there was a recumbent effigy in the recess tomb, in the south aisle, at Cullen, also an inscribed slab with a rudely engraved figure in armour. These monuments, which are both engraved (but not very accurately) in Cordiner's valuable work on the "Remarkable Ruins of the North of Scotland," are now within the mausoleum of the Earls of Fife, near Banff.

The entrance to the south aisle, or St Ann's Chapel, at Cullen, is composed of an arch, supported by pilasters, with plain capitals. Below the capital of the west pilaster are the words—

ME · MĒTO · MORI ·

upon the east—

DISCE · MORI ·

The last motto is followed by two interesting particulars, viz., the name of the builder of the aisle, and his craftsman's mark—

ROBERT · MOIR · MASON ·



It would be interesting to know who this Robert Moir was. He certainly was no "cowan," for possibly no better contemporary specimens of lettering or ashler work exist in any part of Scotland than in the aisle at Cullen. Possibly some of the members of the Architectural Institute may be able to throw light upon Moir's history.

Upon the outside of the aisle, one corner stone bears—

PER · ELENA · HAY

Another—

SOLI · DEO · HONOR · ET · GLORIA ·

The next oldest portion of this interesting fabric is the east end. As to the age of this there is also good data, for it appears that about 1543, the church of St Mary of Cullen was converted into a college by Alexander Ogilvy of Deskford and Findlater, for the accommodation and maintenance of a provost, six prebends, and two singing boys.¹ It is also probable that the Bede-house, which was erected for the support of a certain number of decayed men and women, had been founded by the same individual. The Bede-house stood originally in the old town of Cullen; but, since the removal of the town to the sea-side, "the house" has been done away with, and the charities given to out-door pensioners.

A richly decorated monument, in the Perpendicular style, with canopy, is in the north-east wall of the church. It reaches from the floor to the ceiling, and consists of an arched recess projecting from the wall, enclosing the tomb on three sides. The lower portion is formed of eight panels, each being filled with a figure attired in a hood and long robe, with book in hand. These are popularly believed to represent the "eight innocent boys," for whom, as the following inscription from the tomb shows, Ogilvy and his lady founded the asylum:—

corp̄s . alexr . ogilvy . de . findlater . h̄eros ,
 . . ac . sponsē . elizabeth . gordon . b̄rbmq' . c̄bat .
 preside . p̄bris . b̄ster . p̄berisq' . d̄bobbs .
 . . h̄as . iacint . edes . īb̄ct̄s . b̄terq' . p̄ibs .
 migrabit . et . h̄ac . l̄uce . h̄ic . die . 4 . m̄ens . īb̄lii
 1554 : illa . die . ——— m̄esis ——— 155—

A stone effigy of Ogilvy lies upon the top, and the above lines are from a slab in the back of the tomb. The lines are surrounded by the Ogilvy and Gordon arms, and a variety of curious and elaborate carving. As a whole, this is possibly one of the finest sepulchral monuments in the north of Scotland; but, so far as I know, no really good drawing of it has yet been executed, that by Cordiner, though very creditable for the time, is not so correct as could be wished.²

¹ Coll. Aberd. and Banff, i. 210; Antiquities of Aberd. and Banff, ii. 135-42.

² Remarkable Ruins.

Ogilvy, in all probability, predeceased Elizabeth Gordon, who was his second wife. The portion of the church in which the monument stands may also have been built by them, for in 1863, when alterations were being made upon that part of the church, a stone awmbry and altar-piece were found in fine preservation. These were from 5 to 6 feet in height, embellished with the representation of two angels raising the host, and other ornaments; also these texts (John vi. 54-6), below the cornice :—

CÁRO · MEA · VERE · EST · CIB' · ET · SANGVIS · ME'
 VERE · Ē · POT' · Q' · MÁDVCAT · MEĀ · CARNĒ
 T̄ · BIBIT · MEV̄ · SÁGVINĒ · VIVET · Ī · ĒTERNV̄ ·

The awmbry and altar-piece were unfortunately reconsigned from view; but a description and an engraving were published in the "Banffshire Journal."¹ These relics were of much the same design, and possibly the handiwork of the same craftsman as the "Sacrament table" in the old kirk of Deskford, which bears to have been erected by Alexander Ogilvy and his second wife, Elizabeth Gordon.

By his second wife, a niece of the second Earl of Huntly, he left no son; but by his first wife, a daughter of Lord Saltoun, he had James Ogilvy of Cardell, in Inverness-shire, who, by becoming a steward in the household of Queen Mary in France, offended his father so much that he disinherited him, and settled his estates upon Sir John Gordon, then an infant, and second son of the fourth Earl of Huntly.

This proceeding gave rise to a long and bloody contest between the Ogilvies and the Gordons, and may be said to have been the more immediate cause of the battle of Corrichie, in which Huntly was slain, and his son Sir John taken prisoner and executed. After this the matter was left to arbitration, when Adam Gordon was awarded the lands of Auchendoun and Keithmore, and James Ogilvy those of Deskford and Findlater, &c.²

It was James Ogilvy's grandson, Sir Walter, who was created Lord Ogilvy of Deskford; and in his son, who acquired the title of the Earl of Findlater, the direct male line of the original Ogilvys of Deskford

¹ October 15, 1863.

² Douglas's Peerage, i. 581.

failed, his eldest daughter having brought the title and estates to her kinsman and husband, Sir Patrick Ogilvy of Inchmartin.

Apart from the superb monument to the founder of the provostry, there are others at Cullen, in marble, to some of his successors. Being more modern, the inscriptions need not be given here, particularly as they are intended to appear elsewhere.¹

It need only be added, that the most elaborate and interesting of these is the monument to Sir Patrick Ogilvy's grandson, James, fourth Earl of Findlater, who did so much to bring about The Union of Scotland and England, an event which, in whatever light it may have been looked upon at the period of its consummation, must now be viewed by the natives of both nations as the greatest blessing that ever came over them. Lord Findlater was then chancellor of Scotland, and it is told that when the Parliament of that nation rose for the last time, he exclaimed in the house, "Now, there's the end of an auld sang!" As a sequel to this particular, it may be added that the Earl's younger brother, the Hon. Patrick Ogilvy of Inchmartin, eked out a living by dealing in cattle; and that his Lordship, conceiving this an *infra dig.* occupation for a gentleman of good birth, sharply reproved Patrick one day; and Patrick, being no friend to the Union, is said to have silenced his brother by gruffly remarking, "Better sell nowt, than sell nations!"