

## I.

## THE FORRESTER MONUMENTS IN THE CHURCH OF CORSTORPHINE.

WITH DRAWINGS BY WILLIAM P. BURTON, 1851. (PLATES XII.—XIV.)

BY DAVID LAING, Esq., LL.D., FOREIGN SECRETARY.

A long time has elapsed since first I had occasion to make some inquiries respecting the Monuments in the Collegiate Church of Corstorphine, three miles to the west of Edinburgh. This was in reference to Bernard Stewart of Aubigné, alike celebrated by historians and poets. The special object I had in view was, to illustrate two poems by our old Scottish poet William Dunbar; the first of these exists only in an imperfect state among the earliest remains of Scottish Typography, with the following title, above the woodcut device of "Walterus Chepman":—

**The ballade of ane right noble victorius & myghty lord Barnard stewart lord of Aubigny erle of Beaumont roger and bonaffre consaloure and chamllane ordinaire to the maist heemaist excellēt & maist crystyn prince Loys king of france knyght of his ordoure Capitane of the keypyng of his body Coquereur of Naples and vniuerselle cōstable general of the same Compilit be Maisttir Wyllyam dumbar at the said lordis cūyng to Edinburghe in Scotland send in ane ryght excellēt embassat fra the said maist crystin king to our maist Souerane lord and victorius prince James the ferde kyng of Scottis.**

Bernard Stewart, who arrived in Edinburgh in an infirm state of health, May 9, 1508, died in the following month in the house of Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine. This event was also commemorated by Dunbar in "An Elegy on the death of Bernard Stewart, Lord of Aubigny." This I first published in the collected edition of Dunbar's Poems, in the year 1834, from a MS. volume at Cambridge. An ancient tomb in a niche under the window of the southern transept, with a recumbent male figure in armour and a dog at his feet, had for more than two centuries been pointed out

as marking the place of his interment; but, leaving this erroneous statement for the present, a few words may be added regarding the Church itself.

In the present communication I ought to say that, in regard either to the Church of Corstorphine, or its Monuments, or to the Forrester family, I have nothing very new to add. Some of the members present may remember the pleasant Autumnal day usually devoted to the Society's annual excursion, when such places as Seton Church, Preston Cross and Tower, Wintoun House, the Monastery of Inchcolm, Culross Abbey, Dalmeny Church, Kirkliston and Dundas Castle, &c., were successively visited. It was expected Corstorphine Church might have afforded another agreeable excursion; and in view of this I had the Drawings now exhibited made by a skilful hand in 1851. As this, however, did not take place, it has occurred to me that, by exhibiting them at this time, I might at least take occasion to invite non-resident Members to communicate to the Society notices and drawings of similar Monuments that still exist in their own locality. It would be in vain, indeed, to expect the Society to undertake the publication of a volume on the Sculptured Monuments of Scotland, as a supplement to "The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain," published at London, 1817, folio, which was left uncompleted, by Charles Alfred Stothard (one of the sons of the eminent Artist, the R.A. of that name), from plates etched by himself, he having met with an untimely death in 1821, by falling from a scaffold, while actually engaged in drawing a church window in Devonshire. Another work of the same description is, "The Monumental Remains of Noble and Eminent Persons, comprising the Sepulchral Antiquities of Great Britain," engraved from drawings by Edward Blore, F.S.A. London, 1826, 4to.

Mr Blore, who also was a beautiful draughtsman, included, in his work, the two fine monuments in Douglas Church, Lanarkshire, of Sir James Douglas, *Ob.* 1331; and of Archibald, fifth Earl of Douglas, *Ob.* 1438. In the Society's Proceedings, notices and views of some similar monuments, at Rothesay, by Mr J. C. Roger; at Dalkeith, by Mr James Drummond, R.S.A.; and elsewhere, by other Members; besides those on the West coast of Scotland, may be referred to.

In a volume printed for the Bannatyne Club, entitled "REGISTRUM

DOMUS DE SOLTRE, &c.—CHARTERS of the Hospital of Soltre; of Trinity College, Edinburgh; and other Collegiate Churches in Mid-Lothian," Edinburgh, 1861, one of these churches was that of Corstorphine. In the preface to that volume I gave a summary of what information could be discovered respecting the foundation of the Church, the family of Forrester during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, and notices of the persons who successively held the office of the Provostry. One of our members, Mr Thomas Thomson, W.S., had previously contributed to the "New Statistical Account," in 1845, a valuable article on the church and parish of Corstorphine. Mr Thomson, who continued to take a special interest in the matter, has since collected, I doubt not, additional information on the subject. I regret much, however, to learn that the state of his health has prevented him from furnishing any Supplementary notices on this occasion.

The property of Corstorphine was acquired by Adam Forrester, a wealthy merchant burghess of Edinburgh, from Sir William More of Abercorn, in August 1376. About this time, Adam Forrester is known to have erected a chapel, dedicated to St John, adjoining, and most likely connected with, the Parish Church. In the early part of the following century, by means of additional endowments in 1424 and 1429 by his widow and his son and successor, Sir John Forrester, the buildings were erected into a Collegiate Church, and at length the establishment was confirmed by Papal authority in the year 1440.

There are not many engraved views of the Church. In the Club volume already mentioned there is a sketch of the building from the N.E., by Mr Skene of Rubislaw, before any recent alterations, in the year 1817. Another, from the S.W., by Mr Billings, occurs in the well-known work, "The Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland. Illustrated by Robert William Billings, architect." Edinburgh: 1845-1852. 4 vols. 4to. A view from the S.E. is given in a volume with this title, "The Kirk and the Manse: sixty illustrative views of Parish Kirks and Manses in Scotland in tinted lithography, &c., by the Rev. R. W. Fraser, M.A.," Edinburgh, 1857. 4to. It represents the present appearance of the church, which underwent some necessary, but, as usual, unfortunate restorations in 1828, without, however, actually destroying the external picturesque appearance of the building.

To return to Bernard Stewart and the Corstorphine Monuments :—

BERNARD STEWART of Aubigny was a knight of the order of St Michael and one of the numerous gentlemen of Scottish descent then in the service of Charles VIII. King of France. The researches of Mr Andrew Stuart, M.P., for his "Genealogical History of The Stewarts, &c.," London, 1798, enabled him to furnish the most satisfactory account of this celebrated person, who was directly connected with the Stewarts of Darnley (pp. 197 to 209). He says, "Soon after the death of the Chevalier Jean Stewart, who died in the year 1482, his son Bernard Stewart performed to the King of France foy and homage for the lands and Seigneurie of Aubigny," &c. In the year 1484 Bernard Stewart came as ambassador from Charles VIII. of France to Scotland, for renewing the ancient League between these two countries; and in the year following he was sent with auxiliaries from France to England, and had a share in the victory at Bosworth Field (August 22, 1485), which placed Henry VII. on the throne of England, and terminated the wars of the White and Red Roses, or bloody contests of the houses of York and Lancaster.

Sir John Beaumont, elder brother of the Dramatist, in his poem "Bosworth Field," first printed at London in the year 1629, refers to Bernard Stewart, as leader of the French forces, in the following lines :—

Besides these Souldiers borne within this Ile,  
 We must not of their part, the French beguile,  
 Whom Charles for Henrie's succour did prouide,  
 A Lord of Scotland, BERNARD, was their guide,  
 A blossome of the STUARTS' happy line,  
 Which is on Brittain's throne ordaind to shine.  
 The sun, whose rayes, the heaun with beauty crowne  
 From his ascending, to his going downe,  
 Saw not a brauer leader, in that age,  
 And Bosworth Field must be the glorious stage,  
 In which this Northerne eagle learns to flie,  
 And tries those wings, which after raise him high;  
 When he beyond the snowy Alpes renownd  
 Shall plant French lilies in Italian ground,  
 And cause the craggy Appenine to know,  
 What fruits on Caledonian mountaines grow.

After quoting various interesting passages from foreign and other historical writers respecting Bernard Stewart, the Genealogist adds:—

“Being in an infirm state of health at the time of his arrival (in 1508), with a constitution worn out in military service, he died in the house of Sir John Forrester, at Corstorphin, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, in the beginning of June 1508, and was interred in the church of Corstorphin, where a monument was erected to his memory, with a figure representing him in armour.”

Among the topographical collections of the Laird of MacFarlane, in the Advocates' Library, there is, preserved:—

*“A Relation anent Corstorphin, by the Lord Newbaithe.*

“Corstorphin Church is a Collegiate Church, and the Great Bernard Stuart, that was Viceroy of Naples, and Governour, lyieth there; he retired there before his death. Of him Comines saith, ‘Le Roy fut battu encor que Monsieur de Aubigny y fut.’”

In Gough's “British Topography” this very brief relation is erroneously ascribed to Lord Newbattle. The writer was John Baird of Newbyth, who was admitted to the Bar in June 1647; and after the Restoration he was created a Baronet, and raised to the Bench as a Lord of Session in January 1667. He survived till April 1698.

In like manner, Robert Monteith, in his “Theater of Mortality; or A Further Collection of Funeral-Inscriptions over Scotland. Edinburgh, 1713,” says, “BERNARD STEWART, Duke of Aubigny, lies interred in this Isle of Corstorphine church; and which church is reported to have had a Croce of fine gold thereupon, which gave original to the name of Corstorfine,” &c. (p. 27).

On the other hand, Sir James Balfour, in his “Annals of Scotland,” under the year 1508 (following Holinshed), says, “This year, Cockburn, Bishop of Ross, and Monsieur de la Bautey, comes this year to Scotland, from France. This year also Bernard Steuart, Viceroy of Naples, and the President of Toulouse, comes Ambassadors from Lewis the French King, &c. . . . But in the month of Junij, this same year, the Lord Bernard Steuart, one of the French King's ambassadors, departed this life at Corstorphin, near Edinburgh, in his return from Streveling to France. He commanded, on his death-bed, to enbalme his heart after his death,

and send it to S. Ninians, in Galloway, in performance of a vow which he had made, while he was Viceroy of Naples" (Works, vol. i. p. 230).

From these statements it is clear that Bernard Stewart died at Corstorphine, although the Forresters had a town-house in Edinburgh, where their name was perpetuated till the present century, when Forrester's Wynd, situated to the west of the Parliament House, was swept away, at the same time with the Luckenbooths; the Tolbooth or "Heart of Mid-Lothian," and other buildings, in the course of modern improvements.

Mr Andrew Stuart has given a list of pictures belonging to the Duke of Richmond in France, which, he says, "were at the Chateau d'Aubigny when the author was there in the month of November 1788" (p. 209). I may ask, Where are these paintings now preserved? His words may be quoted:—

"In the Chateau d'Aubigny belonging to the Duke of Richmond in France, there are the following pictures, viz. :—

"In the dining-room, a full length picture, as large as the life, of Jehan Stuart, Grand Connétable de l'armée d'Ecosse, with an inscription upon it describing him as such, and as the premier Seigneur d'Aubigny; and at the bottom of it there is the date of the year 1422. This is a good picture, painted on wood, and has been very well preserved.

"There are also in the drawing-room at Aubigny the heads or portraits in a small size, set in gold, of the successive Seigneurs of Aubigny of the Stewart race, with inscriptions upon each of them. These portraits or heads are inclosed in one frame. . . .

"The third is Berrault (or Bernard) Stuart, with the following inscription :—Seigneur d'Aubigny, Duc de Terre Nove, Marquis de Girace et Squillazzo Comte de Beaumont, d'Arcy, et de Venassac, Grand Connétable de Sicile et de Jerusalem.'"

He has also given a copy of "Baraldus Stewart," or Bernard Stewart's last will and testament, along with the Inventory of his effects taken at Corstorphine, on the 8th June 1508, found among the Derneley papers in the possession of the Duke of Montrose. In this document he specially directed that *his body should be buried in the Church of the Blackfriars, Edinburgh*. That this was done there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt; but the church and monastery were accidentally burnt in 1528, thus escaping the sad and reckless devastation of the English forces at Edinburgh, under the Earl of Hertford, in May 1544.

The first of the Forrester Family connected with Corstorphine was ADAM FORRESTER, already mentioned as a wealthy merchant burghess of Edinburgh, enjoying the royal favour, who had acquired much of his fortune by trading with England. He had charters of lands and baronies in different places from King David Bruce and Robert the Second, between the years 1365 and 1400. He held the office of Alderman or provost of Edinburgh in April 1373, and again in February 1378; was sheriff of Lothian in 1382, and keeper of the Great Seal in 1390. He died in the year 1404, having been twice married—first, to Agnes, daughter of John Dundas of Fingask; and secondly, to Margaret Forrester, who survived him upwards of twenty years, as we learn from a charter confirmed May 26, 1429.

II. Sir JOHN FORRESTER, his eldest son, also distinguished himself, holding the office of Lord Privy Seal during the regency of Murdoch, Duke of Albany. He was a commissioner for the redemption of James the First, long held in captivity in England. On the King's return in 1424, he is designed Master of the Household, and in the following year, Lord High Chamberlain. It was at this period of his life that the Collegiate church was founded and endowed.

III. Sir John Forrester, who succeeded, died before September 14, 1454.

IV. Sir Alexander Forrester, his son, was alive in 1467.

V. Archibald Forrester, his successor, was present in Parliament January 7, 1504-5.

VI. Alexander Forrester had a charter from his father, about the year 1492, of the barony of Corstorphine, reserving the liferent of the Castle to himself and his wife, Margaret Hepburn. This Alexander married Margaret, daughter of Sir Duncan Forrester of Gairden, Master of the Household of King James IV.

#### THE CORSTORPHINE MONUMENTS.

It now remains to identify as far as possible the three several Altar Tombs in the interior of the Church.

#### No. I. (*Plate XII.*)

This no doubt is the monument of the first Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine, the founder of the Collegiate Church, with a recumbent figure of himself and his wife, under an arched recess. On the front of this altar tomb are five shields armorial—1, Forrester; 2, Forrester impaling St Clair

of Orkney ; 3, Forrester ; 4, Forrester impaling a fess chequé ; 5, Forrester. George Crawford, in his "Lives of the Officers of State," says of Sir John Forrester,—He was taken away by death in the year 1440, and adds,—

"He was buried in the choir of the Collegiate Church of Corstorphine, on the north side of the wall, under an arch of freestone, with his statue in armour as big as the life, and his Wife lying beside him, habited in the dress of the times ; but which of his two Ladies cannot be so well known, since upon the tomb both their coats of arms are placed on each side of his own. I could make out no inscription ; if there has been any, it is either worn out through time, or has been defaced as superstitious since the Reformation."<sup>1</sup>

"The Lord Chamberlain" (Crawford continues), "married, first, Dame Jean Saintclair, daughter of Henry I. Earl of Orkney. . . . His second wife was Dame Marion Stewart, Lady Dalswintoun, widow of Sir John Stewart, Knight."

No II. (*Plate XIII.*)

This monument, like the preceding, is in the chancel of the church, has two recumbent figures, but mutilated. The armorial shields in front of the altar tomb represent,—1, Forrester ; 2, Forrester impaling Stewart a fess chequé ; 3, Forrester, also indicating that his lady's name was Stewart. The second Sir John Forrester succeeded in 1441. He distinguished himself as a military man, especially at the siege of Branxton Castle, 1446. From one of the St Giles' Charters, it appears that he was deceased September 15, 1454. (No. 76, p. 103.)

There is, however, some uncertainty regarding several marriages of these Forresters ; and the first Sir John is said to have been three times married. On this head, see Wood's "Peerage," vol. i. p. 600 ; and the "New Statistical Account," vol. i. p. 232, &c. Billings, at the foot of his view of the exterior of the Church, has engraved this monument.

No. III. (*Plate XIV.*)

A recumbent figure of a Knight in Armour, a Dog at his feet.

In front of the Monument there are three Shields of arms, which clearly indicate that it represented one of the Foresters of Corstorphine, and not

<sup>1</sup> Officers of State, Edinburgh, 1726, p. 311. He also refers to his Peerage, p. 148, "where the line and descent of the Family of Forrester is deduced from the Lord Chamberlain to the present Lord Forrester" (Edinburgh, 1716).

Sir Bernard Stewart of Aubigné, as frequently conjectured—the first, St Clair of Orkney impaling Forrester; the second, Forrester; the third, Forrester, with an escutcheon of pretence, a cross engrailed Sinclair. It is most probable that this is the monument of Sir Alexander, who succeeded the second Sir John, Forrester.

A safe conduct was granted, 15th June 1464, to Alexander Forster, Dominus de Corstorfyn, and Gilbert Forster, to visit St John of Amiens in Picardy. (Rymer's "Fœdera," vol. xi. p. 528, and p. 604.)

Mr Thomson (in a MS. note dated in November 1859), in reference to this monument, says:—"I am satisfied that the figure within the church is Alexander Forrester, who made two pilgrimages to the Shrines of Thomas of Canterbury, and St John de Amyce in Picardy, on 14th June 1464, and on 14th March 1465-6. He returned home safe from these journeys, and on 15th October 1467, he obtained a decree of Lords' Auditors against Forbase of Pitsligo, for intromitting with the rents of his lands of Fingask. I think the dog at his feet indicates his pilgrimages. The arms, I believe, represent the Stewart arms impaled with the Forresters, so his wife must have been a Stewart. The Stewart arms are represented in a different way on the tomb of Sir John Forrester. Perhaps this difference means that Stewart was mother, not wife of the party."

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Having submitted the drawings of the monuments and shields to a competent authority in heraldic matters—Mr Henry Laing, author of two important volumes of "A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Scottish Seals," published in 1850 and 1866—he has obligingly furnished the following description of the armorial bearings of the Forresters' shields:—

"No. I.

"The first shield on right of spectator contains the coat of Forrester. Second shield, Forrester impaling St Clair of Orkney, as in No. III., the 1st and 4th quarters only, but here correctly placed on the sinister side of the shield. Third shield, Forrester as before. Fourth shield, Forrester impaling Stuart—thus, or. a fess chequé, azure and argent,

surmounted by a bend, engrailed gules. Marion, daughter of Sir W. Stuart of Dalswinton, was third wife of Sir John Forrester. Fifth shield, Forrester as before. These shields are described by Wood, vol. i. p. 599.

“No. II.

“First and third shields are Forrester as before; the second shield has Forrester impaling what appears to be a bend, charged with another of Lozenges or Mascles, but whose arms they are is unknown.

“Wood, in his *Peerage*, vol. i. p. 600, assigns this monument to the second Sir John Forrester, and describes the second shield as ‘Forrester impaling Stuart a fess chequé;’ but in neither of the drawings is there anything like a fess, but distinctly a bend, which the author has probably mistaken for a fess. The artist is not likely to have made such a mistake.

“No. III.

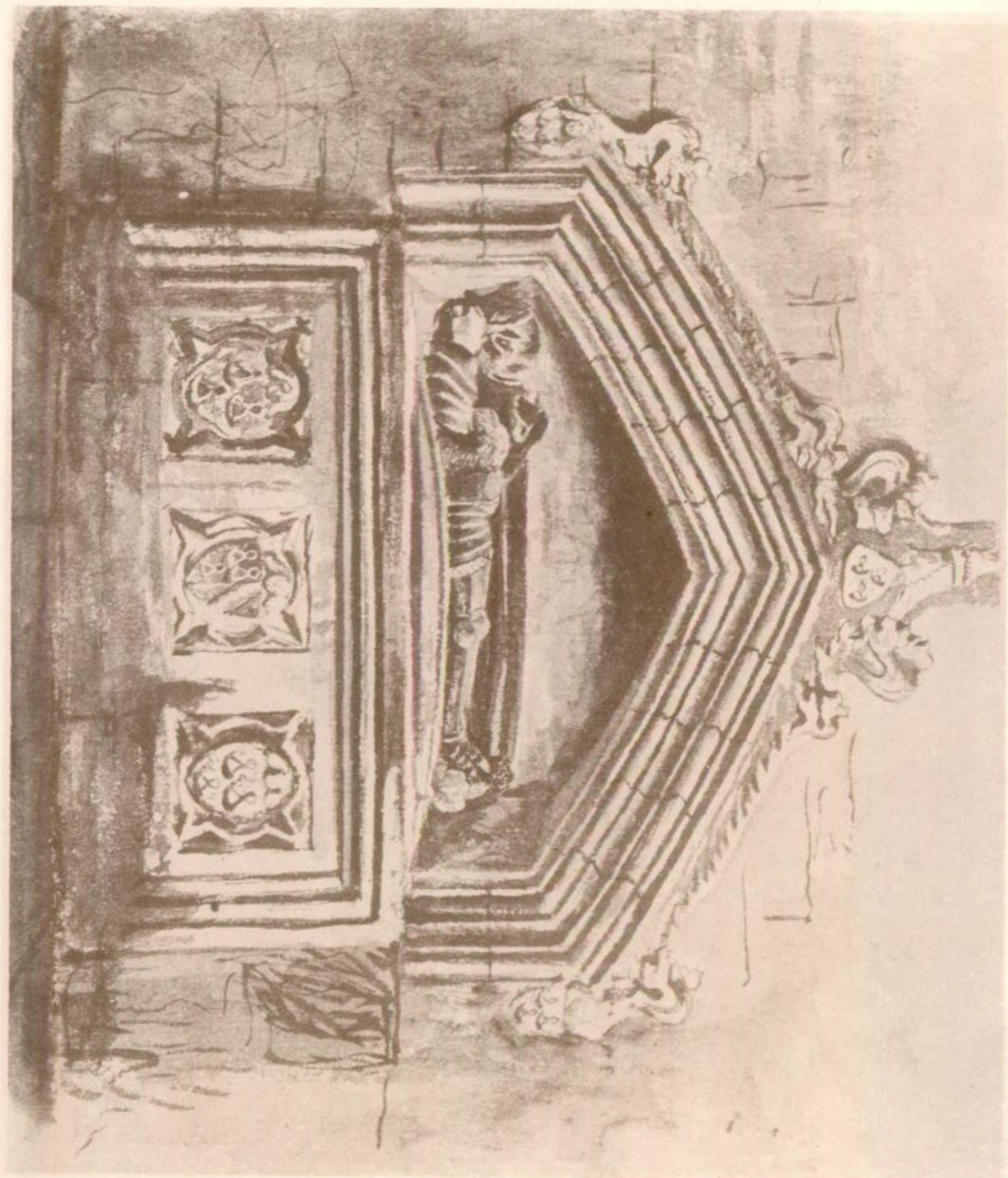
“The first shield contains the coats of St Clair of Orkney and Forrester of Corstorphine. The latter is correctly given, but the former has only the first and fourth quarters of the St Clair coat, the entire being—quarterly, 1st and 4th azure, a ship within the royal tressure, gules, for Orkney; 2d and 3d argent, a cross engrailed sable, for St Clair. This being the coat carried by Henry Earl of Orkney, whose daughter Jean married Sir John Forrester, who therefore would correctly enough impale them with his own; but it surely must be an error of the sculptor to place the Lady’s arms on the dexter side of the shield.

“The second shield contains the coat of Forrester of Corstorphine, argent three hunting horns, sable-stringed gules. The colours here given and the subsequent ones are, of course, not on the stone, but are taken from Nisbet, vol. i.

“The third shield is the same as the last, with the addition of a cross coupé engrailed, or more correctly thus—argent a cross coupé engrailed sable between three hunting horns of the last stringed gules. There is no appearance of a shield of pretence here, though it is so stated in the memoir; and why the St Clair cross should be here introduced, when the first shield shows sufficiently the alliance, is difficult to explain.



MONUMENT OF SIR JOHN FORRESTER OF CORSTORPHINE. (1440)  
(FROM A DRAWING BY W.P. BURTON)



MONUMENT OF SIR JOHN FORRESTER OF CORSTORPHINE. (1454)  
(FROM A DRAWING BY W.P. BURTON)



MONUMENT OF SIR ALEXANDER FORRESTER OF CORSTORPHINE.  
(FROM A DRAWING BY W. P. BURTON)