I.

NOTICE OF THE MEMORIAL BRASS OF DR DUNCAN LIDDEL, AND OF THE TOMBSTONE OF SIR PAUL MENZIES OF KINMUNDY, IN SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH, ABERDEEN. BY ANDREW GIBB, Esq., F.S.A. Scot. (Plates XIX.-XXIII).

There are so few monumental brasses remaining in Scotland—only some half dozen perhaps in all—that I have thought it might not be uninteresting to direct the attention of the Society to that of Dr Duncan Liddel, which is preserved in the church of St Nicholas, Aberdeen. It is a large oblong plate, measuring some $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by about 3 in breadth. In addition to a rather lengthy inscription, inscribed in the Roman character, it displays what is considered to be a portrait of Liddel dressed in his professional robes, seated at a table writing, surrounded by his books and philosophical instruments (Plate XIX.) It exists in a very perfect state, but seems to be so little known, except locally, that no notice of it has appeared in any of the works specially devoted to the subject of monumental brasses.

I may mention, in passing, that during some recent alterations in the church where Liddel's brass is situated, a tombstone, which had been concealed by the seating, was discovered, which showed the matrix of what must have been a brass border of considerable elegance. It proved to be the monument of Sir Paul Menzies of Kinmundy, which will be afterwards noticed. Sir Paul was a well-known provost of the city, a remarkable man, of influence, and strong individuality of character, in the days of Charles I.

There is another small brass in Drum's aisle of the same church, to the memory of Sir Alexander de Irvyn, Lord of Drum, and of his wife Elizabeth de Keth, daughter of Sir Robert de Keth, great Marischal of Scotland, the date of which is about 1420. It had, doubtless, been made during the lifetime of the parties commemorated, and it is curious to observe that no loving hand has filled in the dates of the deaths of the worthy pair, the spaces for which remain still accusingly blank. It is of elegant workmanship, in black letter, with Lombardic capitals, and it had been inlaid with a black enamel. It is however well known, and has

been often printed, but I am sorry to say never correctly, and therefore I give a copy, reduced from a rubbing made from the original (Plate XX.)

Various traditions have been printed as to the parties commemorated on this brass, for which there is not sufficient evidence. There had long existed a violent feud, often resulting in bloodshed, between the Irvines of Drum and the Keiths; and Sir Robert de Keth, Mareshal of Scotland, grants to Sir Alexander de Irvyn, Lord of Drum, and Elizabeth de Keth, his daughter (October 16, 1411), in contemplation of their marriage, and for "staunching the feud," the lands mentioned (in Barony of Strathekyn).

This Sir Alexander succeeded his father in July 1411, when Harlaw was fought. He afterwards founded and endowed the chantry of St Ninians in St Nicholas church in Aberdeen, and he was buried there in 1457. The stone called the "Drum Stone" is still shown, where his father, the laird of Drum, sat down to take his last look of the old castle, on his way to the field of the "red Harlaw," where, towards the end of the fray, he engaged in single combat with Maclean of Duart, and both were killed.

There seems, however, to be some grounds for a tradition that Elizabeth de Keth had been betrothed to a brother of Sir Alexander, and that on his early death, probably on the fatal field of Harlaw along with his father, his next brother married her.

If I were asked to give a probable reason for the blanks on this monument, I should say that, as it had been made abroad, no one in the locality was found capable of making the additions to the dates till the matter fell out of mind in the busy turmoil of the times.

The brass, however, that I now specially wish to direct attention to is in commemoration of Dr Duncan Liddel, a native of Aberdeen. He was born in 1561, and pursued his education at the Grammar School and King's College of that city till he was eighteen years of age, when, like many other enterprising Scotsmen of the period, he went abroad to finish his education by travel and study at the continental seats of learning.² He travelled through Poland, visited Frankfort on the Oder, and Breslau in Prussia, attending for a time the lectures of Paul Wittich, and those of his own countryman John Craig. After this he became a teacher of mathematics and philosophy in the former city. He next removed to

¹ Peter Buchan's "History of the Keiths," p. 34.

² Bruce's "Eminent Men of Aberdeen," p. 115.

Rostock in North Germany, and finally settled in Helmsted in Brunswick, where he was elected professor of mathematics in the Julian College, while he was yet only thirty years of age. Here he became, in succession, professor of medicine, dean, and lastly, rector of the university, and first-physician to the Court of Brunswick. Here also were composed and printed several of the works which spread his name and fame over Europe.¹

In 1607 he returned to his native country, and prepared his "Ars Medica" for the press. It was published at Hamburg in 1608, with a dedication to King James. In 1610 appeared his last work, "A Treatise on Fevers," dedicated to Prince Henry of Wales. He was never married, and, being of economical habits, he in the course of his wanderings accumulated a considerable fortune.

In 1612, while living in Edinburgh, he, as he expresses it in the deed, "Seiking the good educatione of the youth, the augmentatione and reparatione of the misgoverned rent of the saidis Colledge, ane blessing to my cuntrie, and to give goode example, in steiring upe others to doe the lyke goode and honourable desyre," executed a deed of settlement, bequeathing the estate of Pitmedden, which he had lately purchased, for "the reward and maintenance" of talented and poor scholars at the colleges of his native city.

After this he returned to Aberdeen and ended his days there, on the 17th December 1613, in the fifty-second year of his age. Eight days before his death he executed another deed, confirming his former grant, and bequeathing "his library of books, and mathematical instruments and globes," to Marischal College, and the rest of his fortune—after providing suitable legacies for his brother and sister and a sum for the poor of the city—to endow a professorship of mathematics in said college. In this deed he directed that his executors—who were the magistrates of the city, and Mr Thomas Nicolson, during his life—should erect two monuments to perpetuate his memory, one on the lands of Pitmedden to have this inscription:—

"Anno a nato Christo 1614 Authoritate Regis ordinumque Regni hujus villam agrosque de Pittmedden sex alumnis Literarum Studiosis in Academia Abredonensi donavit confirmavit que Duncanus Liddeilus Medicinæ Doctor."

Stuart's "Life of Dr Liddell." 2 "Aberdeen Mortifications," pp. 41-47.

And another to "be erected within the kirk of New Aberdeen, as Mr Thomas Nicolson and the Counsell of Aberdeen shall think expedient;" and that one hundred pounds "should be spent upon his funeral, and a distribution to the poor."

The monument erected on the lands of Pitmedden, on the banks of the river Don, about six miles from Aberdeen, was a small square obelisk-like erection, built of stone, inscribed on the four sides. It still exists, on a slight eminence near the centre of the property, and is in a good state of preservation, having been several times repaired (Plate XXI.)

For some reason or other the erection of the monument in the church of St Nicholas was not proceeded with till some eight years after the Doctor's death. It took the form of the brass, figured on Plate XIX. It was executed in Antwerp in the year 1622, at a cost of fourteen hundred merks,² but no artist or engraver's name has been discovered upon it. At first it was fastened on a stone in the floor of the church above Liddel's grave. Here it lay till the restoration of the building in 1750 rendered its removal necessary. It was then taken up and deposited, with other similar relics—old lead, brass hearses, the stocks, the town's gallows, and other odds and ends—in a vault under the east end of the church, called the Pity Vault, and which, for several years about that time, was used by a plumber for a workshop, and afterwards as a soup kitchen.³ This vault has since been cleared out, fitted up with the carved seats preserved from the old churches, and is now called St Mary's Chapel.

It forms a not uninstructive commentary on the gratitude of public men that this Brass,—the memorial of a man who had been one of the most liberal benefactors of the college which has done not a little for the culture and enlightment of the citizens of Bon-Accord—should have lain in this vault, neglected and apparently forgotten for upwards of half a century,—forgotten, not only by the authorities who had taken on themselves the engagement to look after it, along with the other benefactions of the donor, but also by the local historians who had

^{1 &}quot;Aberdeen Mortifications," pp. 65-69.

² "Aberdeen Council Register," vol. 1. p. 326.

³ Ramsay's "Selected Writings," p. 233; Douglas's "East Coast of Scotland," p. 87.

recorded in their works his generous bequests, and the instructions he left to guard them and keep them in remembrance.

When the brass was accidentally discovered about sixty years ago and put up, it was fastened to one of the square pillars of the West Church, near to where it had originally been placed. Its position is, no doubt, one that sufficiently protects it from injury, but it has been allowed to tarnish to almost the same colour as the stones that surround it, so that, in the dark part of the church where it is, under the gallery, it is seldom seen by visitors unless it be specially pointed out to them. This is perhaps the reason why it has so long escaped being mentioned among notices of our monumental brasses, and has the local reputation of being but a "singular piece of art," not very creditable, perhaps, to take much notice of. This strange obliviousness to the merits of a work of real excellence is curious, considering the attention that has been lavished on some pieces of tapestry in the same church, the history of which, to say the least of it, is equally obscure, and which can only claim attention, as works of art, for their meretricious eccentricity.

The inscription on the brass, when rendered into English, is as follows:-

"In hope of a happy resurrection

Here rests D. Duncan Liddell, Doctor of Medicine,

Son of John Liddell, citizen of Aberdeen.

Died 17 December, A.D.—1613, in the 52 year of his age

Posthumous Fame, the never failing certifier of merit hath dedicated and consecrated this monument to the eternal memory of

D. Duncan Liddell M.D, whom virtue took possession of at his birth, and as he grew up, profound skill in medicine and all departments of Philosophy and Mathematics adorned, and generosity distinguished above his contemporaries. To him the public Professor of Mathematics in the College of Aberdeen owes his yearly Stipend, and Six Alumni of the same College their maintenance."

Let me now, in conclusion, offer a few remarks as to what may have

Bruce's "Eminent Men," p. 121.

been the probable history of the designing and manufacture of this brass, and what are some of its prominent characteristics.

We have seen that, for some reason or other, it was not until some seven or eight years after the death of Dr Liddel that the construction of his monument in St Nicholas Church was seriously set about. By that time Sir Paul Menzies of Kinmundy—the liberal patron of the fine arts and energetic promoter of literature, by whose influence, along with that of Bishop Patrick Forbes, Edward Raban, the first printer in the north, was induced to set up his press and settle in Aberdeen—had assumed the first place of influence in the city; George Nicholson, the relative of the Thomas Nicholson named in Liddel's deed of mortification, was intimately associated with him; Alexander Jaffray of Kingswells, one of Liddel's greatest admirers, was Dean of Guild; Dr Patrick Dun, who had, when a young man, studied medicine under Liddel in Germany, and who became, at the earnest request of Jaffray, the editor of his posthumous papers, including his curious and amusing work on the "Preservation of Health," had been elected principal of Marischal College.

Associated with these was George Jamieson, the eminent painter. He had just arrived from Antwerp, and set up his easel in his native city of Aberdeen. He was at this time a young man of thirty-three years of age, just bursting into fame. He soon became very intimate with these friends of Dr Liddel,—Sir Paul Menzies, Provost Nicholson, Dean of Guild Jaffray, and Principal Dun. He painted their portraits and those of their families, and afterwards, they stood sponsors at the baptism of his children, some of whom were named after them.

To this circle of eminent public men was left the work of constructing the required monument of Dr Liddel. What is more natural to suppose than that they should have consulted with the young and talented artist as to its form? or that he should have been asked to supply them with the design for it, especially as there was no other artist that we know of, within their reach, so capable of assisting them as he was. Indeed, it seems not at all unlikely that it was owing to him that the memorial took the form it did,—a brass containing a portrait of the deceased, a thing quite unusual in the district.

¹ Kennedy's "Annals of Aberdeen," vol. i. p. 174.

² Walker's "Deans of Guild," p. 45.

This, at least, was the conviction forced on me when I saw the design first produced in black and white on paper, for the original cannot possibly be seen or judged of where it now stands, and in its present tarnished state. It is so unlike all the brasses, or drawings of such, that I have seen,—so widely different in conception and execution from the conventional work of our brass designers and engravers.

The arrangement of the inscription and the style of lettering are so unmistakeably like those of the stone slabs of a similar date, still preserved about the churches of St Nicholas and St Machar—they differ, indeed, in nothing but the materials on which they are cut—that I could not resist the belief but that the general plan of the brass was adopted from these and the artistic part added. In short, that though made in Antwerp it was designed in Aberdeen, and that the panel, for which there was no example in contemporary art, was the suggestion of our local painter, and that he had also furnished the complete design for it (Plate XXII.)

It will be seen that the composition of this part is the work of a free and experienced hand. The faults about it are only such as might be made by an engraver who was not perfectly skilled in artistic work, and who was, therefore, somewhat uncertain about the effective reproduction on brass of a drawing supplied to him, and which it was out of the power of the other artist to oversee and correct by revisal during the progress of its execution.

The mechanical workmanship of the plate is extremely coarse and unfinished. There is no appearance of its ever having been polished after being cut, or filled in in the usual way to give it colour. The lines are bare, jagged, and bright, as if just from the tool of the manipulator. In marked contrast to this,—to the stiff, ill-spaced, and indifferently formed letters, and to the whole style and finish of the inscribed part of it,—is the unconventional ease and abandon with which the figure and its surroundings are sketched in. The picture panel is just an unelaborated pen-and-ink sketch on a large scale, or such a picture as a painter might chalk in on his raw canvas, to indicate the composition of his future picture, with such shortcomings as we have alluded to, which are principally noticeable about the finish of the head and features, and especially the eyes. This part, if taken out of its black-bordered

setting of letters, could be framed as a picture, and would then prove as interesting a piece of portraiture for the period as is often to be met with in many portrait galleries.

Whether the figure, which is extremely interesting as illustrating the costume of the period, be a good portrait of Liddel, as it is no doubt intended to be, I am unable to judge, as no other seems to exist; but the head and bust are copied and somewhat filled in, in finish, from the brass, in an engraving by J. Beugo, and issued as such in Professor Stuart's sketch of the life of Dr Liddel, published in 1790. It seems probable enough that Jamieson may have met with Liddel, and got the materials for preparing the portrait, while pursuing his studies on the Continent. It bears several of the characteristics generally attributed to his works; and as it shows more skill in drawing than is to be observed in most of his paintings, it—if it is admitted to be his—is one of the most valuable of his works, and ought to be treasured as such in his native town.

Allan Cunningham says,—"He learned the light and shade of colour in the company of Vandyck; but it is more than probable that he grounded his style upon the older and ruder monuments of his own country." "His landscapes were small, and remarkable for the clearness of their colours and the accuracy of their perspective." "It may gratify certain sorts of critics to dwell on the undoubted facts, that a certain hardness of manner is visible, even in the happiest of his works; that his portraits are often of a severe aspect, with a touch too much of the vinegar of the times in them, and that he has reached but seldom the perfect eass and happy gracefulness of nature."

Whether the proofs presented by the brass itself be conclusive that Jamieson was the designer of it or not, there is no doubt that he was in Aberdeen when it was designed, and in close friendship with the parties empowered to erect it; that it was manufactured in Antwerp, from which he had returned just two years before, and where, doubtless, he had seen the work of producing such memorials going on.

From these considerations, and others that might be adduced, I have no hesitation in believing that the picture panel on the brass, from a rubbing of which our plate (Plate XXII.) has been prepared, is a veritable line for line copy of a drawing by our earliest and most famous Scottish portrait painter George Jamieson.

Sir Paul Menzies of Kinmundy.—During some alterations in the West Church of Aberdeen, made in 1875, the tomb-stone of Sir Paul Menzies of Kinmundy was discovered (Plate XXIII.) It is a large stone of dark-coloured marble, and shows the matrix of an elegant brass border, which it had possessed when in its perfect state. What has become of this border, or when it disappeared, is not known. In all probability it had been stolen and destroyed sometime during the twenty-five years when the nave of St Nicholas Church stood in ruins, and the West Church was in process of erection,—namely, from 1730 to 1755. The stone itself is in a moderately good state of preservation. It is inscribed with the knight's arms, and a Latin inscription of some twelve lines, a good deal worn, but still readable, cut in a rather delicate Roman character. The inscription, rendered into English, reads:—

"Sacred to Almighty God,

and to the memory of Sir Paul Menzies of Kinmundy, Knight. Descended from a noble family, he spent his life here, and was twelve times elected Chief Magistrate of the city by the votes of the citizens of Bon-Accord. He held that office for as many years, endeared to all by the mildness of his disposition and the courtesy of his manners. Once married, and happy in that marriage, having now attained the age of eighty, he laid down the spoils of death, December 18th, 1641, in hope of a happy resurrection."

A few more lines are seen below the main inscription, but being on a part of the stone that has given way to natural decay and the action of busy feet, they cannot be read. Probably they refer to his son John, whom Spalding, the historian of the Troubles, says, was a "a brave youth of singular expectation," who was untimely drowned while "riding through the North Esk water," and whose body was conveyed to Aberdeen, and buried in St Nicholas Church, on the 22d of August 1639, with military honours, instead of the usual funeral sermon, amid great lamentations.

Sir Paul Menzies was of a family which, for three hundred years, possessed almost unbounded influence and fame about Aberdeen. The Menzies's of Pitfoddels were descended originally from Sir Robert Menzies of Castle Weem, Perthshire. For the two hundred years following

¹ Spalding's "Memorials," vol. i. p. 230.

1426, when Gilbert Menzies—who was the first of his family who held the official position in Aberdeen—was elected to that office, they may almost be said to have been hereditary provosts of the city; for during that period they occupied that seat for a hundred and twelve years. The main branch of the family continued steadfastly to adhere to the faith of the unreformed Church, till it became extinct in the person of John Menzies, who died without issue in 1843. He bequeathed all that remained of his property to endow the Roman Catholic College of Blairs, on Dee-side.

Sir Paul was the last of his name and family who filled the provost's chair in Aberdeen. He seems to have early swerved from the faith of his fathers, and accepted the new order of things at the Reformation; for in 1611, when the ministers and session ordered the magistrates to take order with the people, he was the first baillie "who was appointed to gang throw the towne on the ordinar preiching dayes in the weik, als weill as on the Saboth day, to caus the people to resort to the sermones," and in 1620 he was elected one of the elders of St Nicholas Church.

In 1623 he was made provost of the city, which office he held, at that time, for eleven years in succession. During this period he seems to have embraced every opportunity for promoting the cause of literature and the fine arts. By his influence, along with that of Bishop Patrick Forbes, a patent was procured from the king for Edward Raban, the first printer in the north, who was thereby induced to set up his press, and settle in Aberdeen.

His patronage of literary men and their works was very marked, and was sometimes somewhat remarkable; as, for example, he induced the magistrates to undertake the publication of the learned and accomplished professor of divinity, Dr Baron's work, entitled—

"Disputatio Theologica, De vero discrimine peccati mortalis & venialis, deque impossibilitate implendi legem Dei ob quotidianam peccatorum venialium incursionem. Cui annexa est Appendix de possibilitate præstandi legem consideratam secundum ἐπιλικειαν Evangelicam. Authore Roberto Baronio, Ecclesiaste Abredonensi, S. S. Theologia Doctore, et ejusdem in Academia Marescallana Professore. Abredoniae, Excudebat Edwardus Rabanus, 1633. 8vo."

¹ Kirk-Session Records, vol. i. p. 77.

I give the translation:-

"A Theological Disputation concerning the true difference between mortal and venial sins; and also of the impossibility of perfectly keeping the law of God, by reason of the daily inroads of venial sins. To which is added an Appendix, as to the possibility of fulfilling the law, when viewed according to the revealed Gospel. By Robert Baron, minister at Aberdeen, Doctor of the sacred Science of Theology, and Professor of the same in the Marischal College."

A rather remarkable book to be published at the cost of the Town Council. It was printed by Edward Raban, in 1633, at a cost to the city of one hundred and eleven pounds Scots, of which twenty-one pounds were paid for the paper. He also induced Dr Patrick Dun, principal of Marischal College, to undertake the editing of Dr Liddel's posthumous papers, besides other works of a kindred sort; as, for example, the numerous educational works of David Wedderburn, who held the office of rector of the Grammar School for about forty years at this period.

When George Jamieson, the painter, arrived in Aberdeen from his Continental studies, Sir Paul at once became an active promoter of his interests, and introduced him to the king, whose portrait he painted, as well as those of most of the other notables of the court.

In 1633, when King Charles came to Scotland for his coronation, he was deputed by the Council to represent the city at Edinburgh, and 3000 merks were voted to defray his expenses, and 200 franks to purchase confections for the king. On that occasion the provost's charger was equipped with a silk mantle, ornamented with velvet, and fringed with small pesments and pear buttons, the cost of which was L.121, 6s. The cost of the harnessing, including "stirupe irnes, brydill, bitt," &c., was L.80, 8s. 4d., besides two pounds of "drink siluer" to his man.²

During some jubilant display of loyalty by the citizens of Aberdeen, the great bell of the city, "Old Lowrie," which during the preceding three hundred years had called the people to the services of religion, and tolled only on the demise of the great and noble, was injured so materially that it had to be sent to Flanders to be recast. It came back bearing

¹ Aberdeen Council Register, vol. lii. p. 115.

² Dean of Guild's Accounts.

Sir Paul's name upon it, and continued in active service till the late fire in 1874 again reduced it to a mass of useless metal.

While in Edinburgh attending the coronation, he not only received, at the hands of the king, the honour of knighthood, but he was also enabled, by favour of the king, to render signal service to the city, by procuring a charter from Parliament ratifying the ancient liberties of the burgh, and containing a gift of the sheriffship within the burgh, freedom, and territory thereof, and various other privileges not possessed by the citizens till then.¹

From that time Sir Paul retained the especial friendship of the king; for in 1635, when Patrick Leslie was elected provost, and objected to for his Covenanting principles, Charles sent an order to the Council to set Leslie aside and elect Sir Paul again to the office, which was done.²

At the election the following year, a curious scene was enacted in the Council Chamber. Patrick Leslie was again put forward by his friends in opposition to Robert Johnstown, and it took Sir Paul and his followers three or four hours of physical exertion to expel them from the Council room, or prevent Leslie from having any voice in the election. But although the election was completed in this way, and Robert Johnstown elected, it was afterwards set aside by a decreet of the Lords of Privy Council, on the ground that it had not been made in a properly fair and peaceable manner, and another took place, when Alexander Jaffray of Kingswells was chosen provost.³

Sir Paul departed this life in his own house in Aberdeen, on Saturday, the 18th December 1641, and was suitably interred in St Nicholas' Church, amid the regrets of the citizens, on the following Monday. His portrait by Jamieson is preserved in the hall of Marischal College.

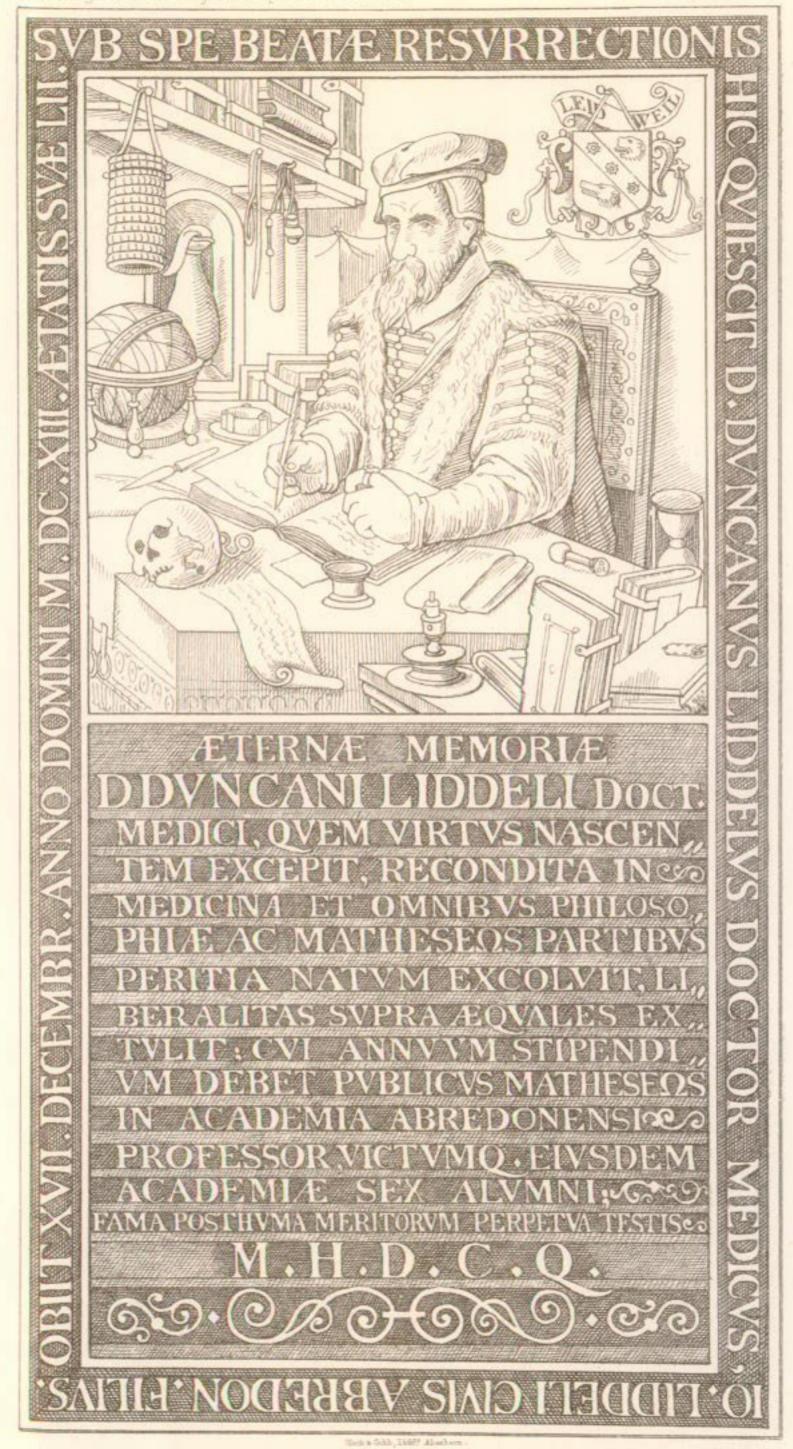
It might have been thought that the monument of so remarkable a man and so eminent a provost—one who had served the citizens of Bon-Accord so long and so well as Sir Paul Menzies had done—would have been better cared for by the magistrates than his one has been; and that, being such as it was—a marble with a brass border, having some pretensions to elegance—it would have been allowed to come down

¹ Council Register, vol. lii. pp. 113-116.

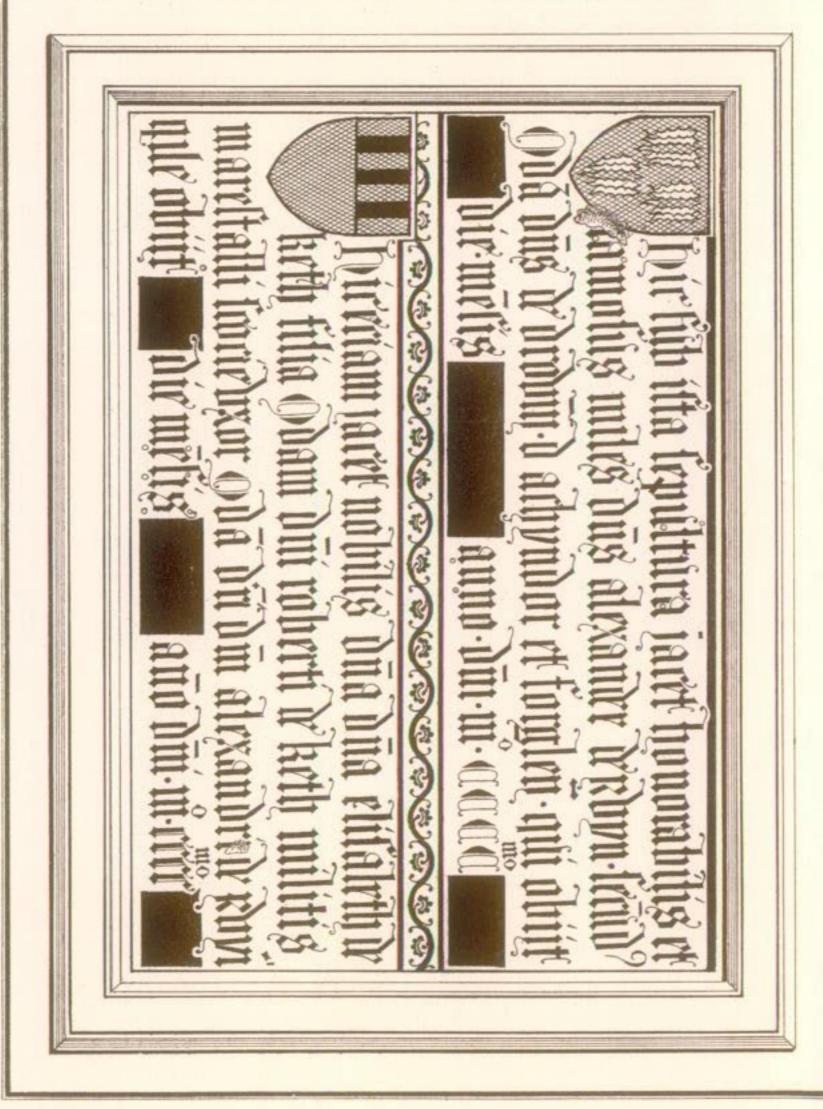
² Ibid. p. 203. ³ Ibid. p. 217-235.

to our time at least without being subjected to wanton and wilful spoliation.

It may be noted, ere we part with Sir Paul, that one memorial of his family remains, in the large pearl that surmounts the Scottish crown, which is said to have been fished out of the Aberdeenshire burn of Kelly, now called the Ebry, and presented to King James in 1620; in return for which the donor was granted certain lands about Dunfermline, and the custom of merchants' goods in Aberdeen during his life,—a recompense characteristic of the sagacious monarch, as it could be made without interfering with the revenues of the crown.

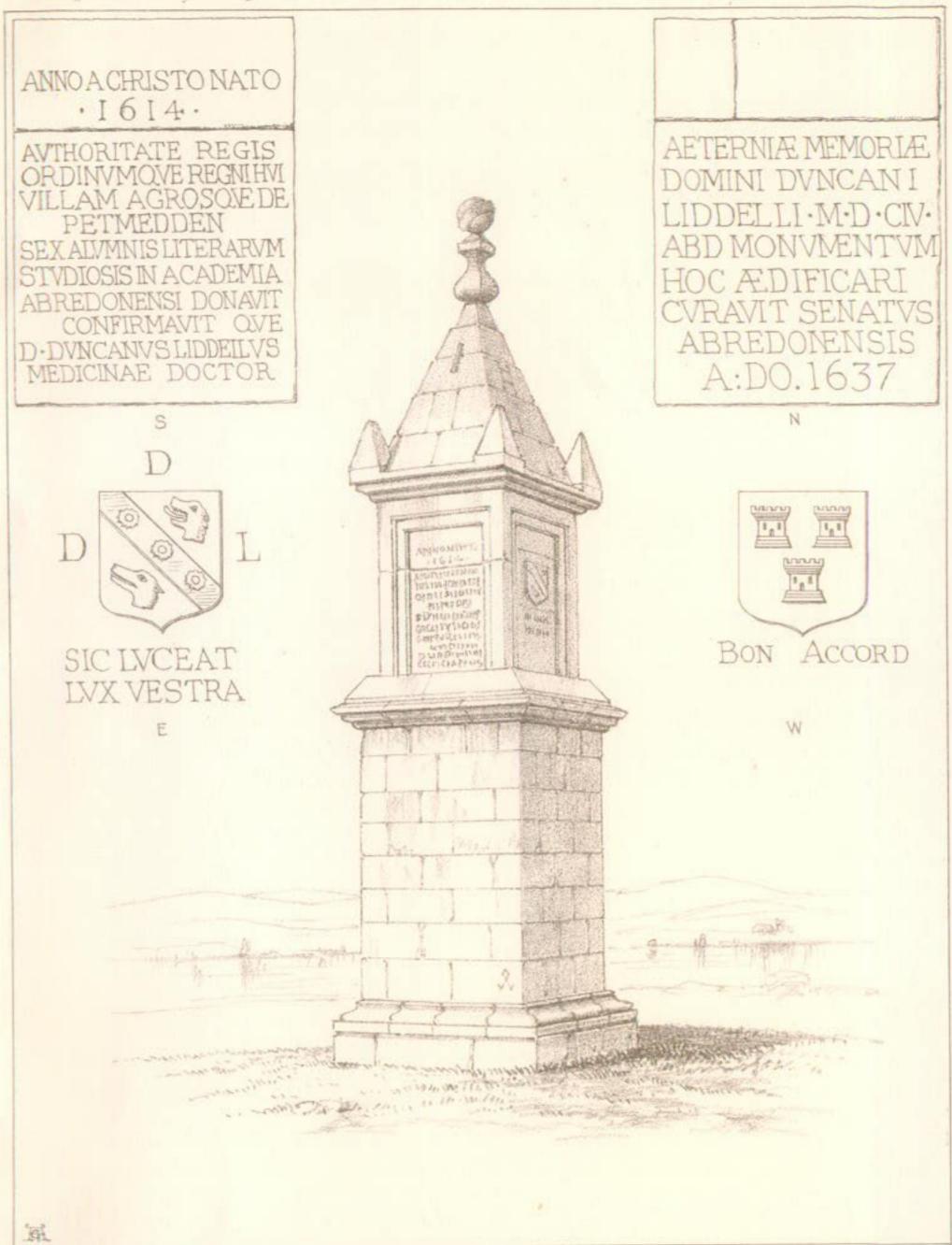


DR LIDDEL'S BRASS, St Nicholas Church, Aberdeen.

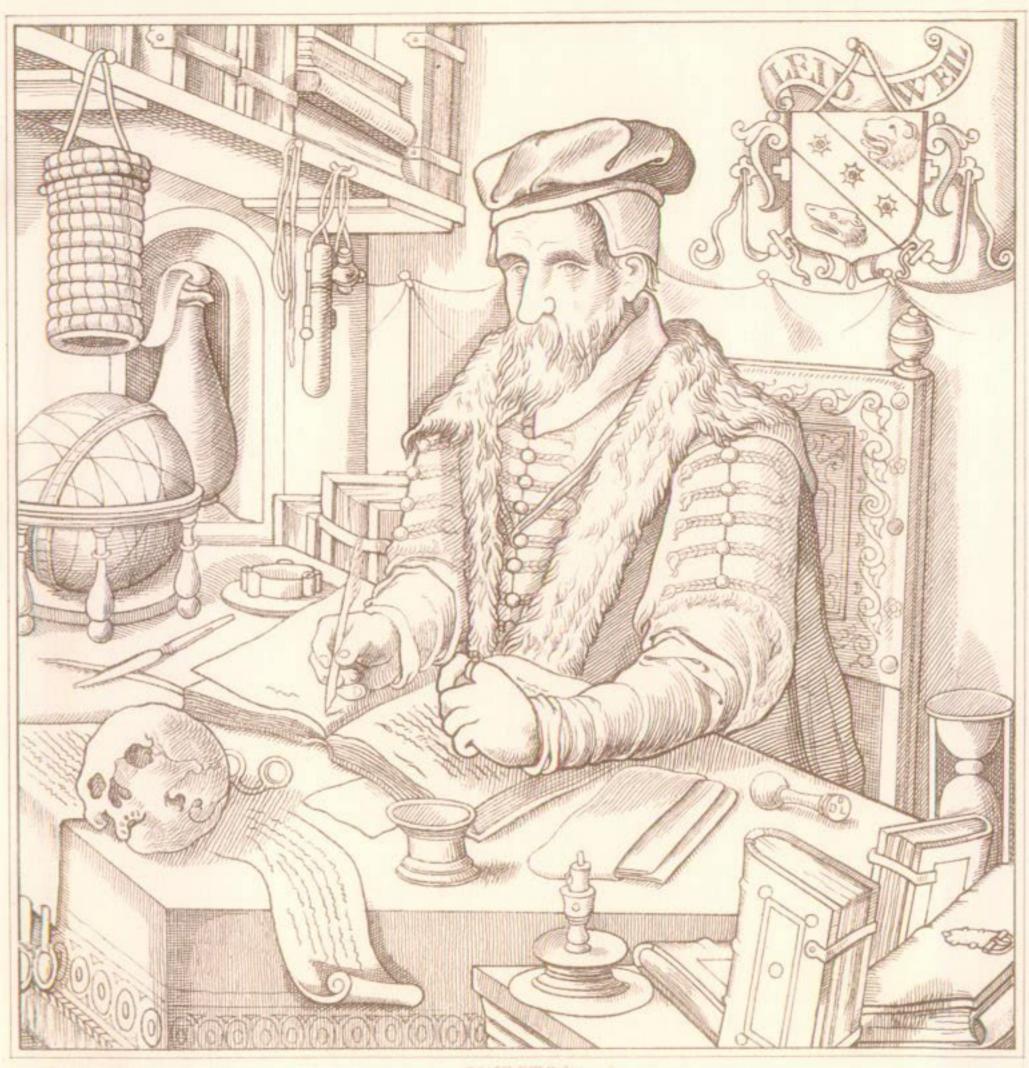


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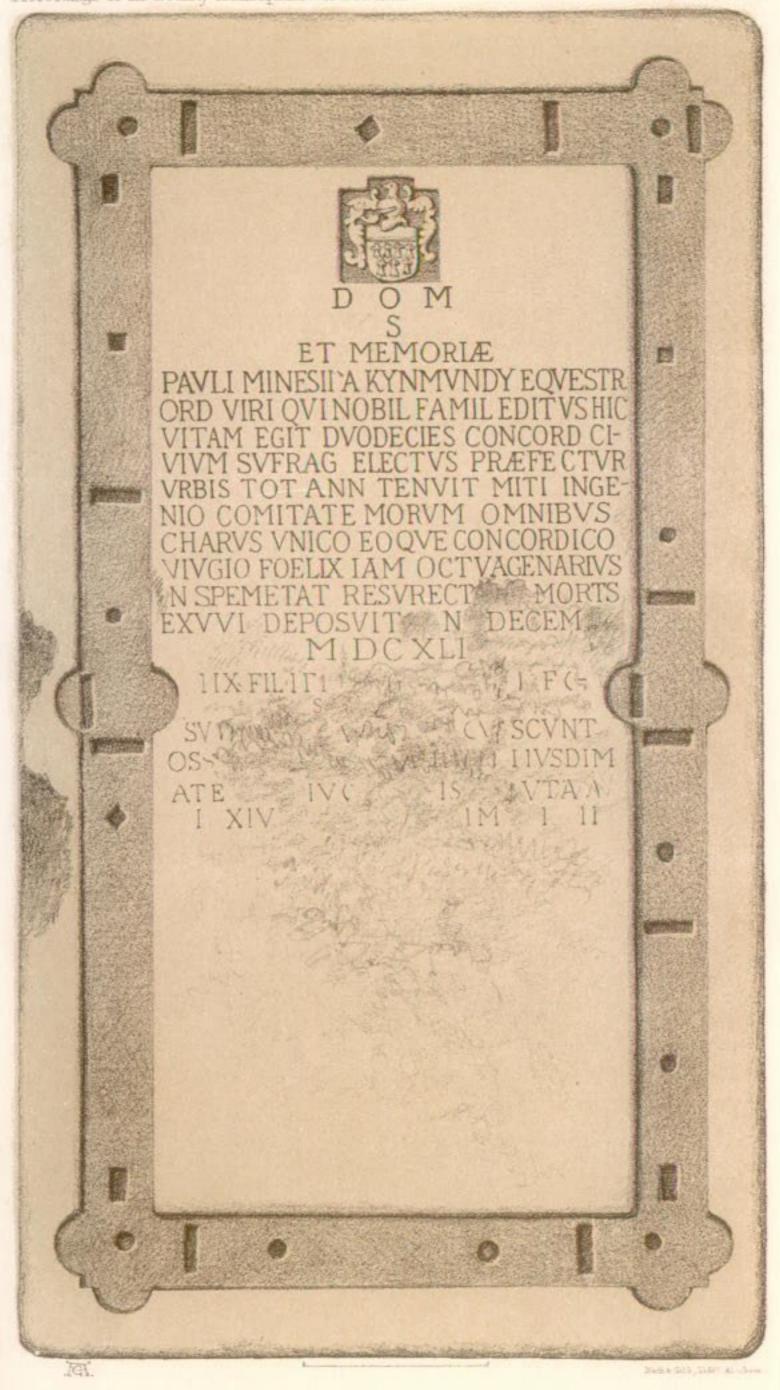
THE IRVINE BRASS, St.Nicholas Church, Aberdeen



Sunt a Sala Linery all where



PORTRAIT OF DE LIDDEL.



TOMBSTONE OF SIR PAUL MENZIES. St:Nicholas Church, Aberdeen.