

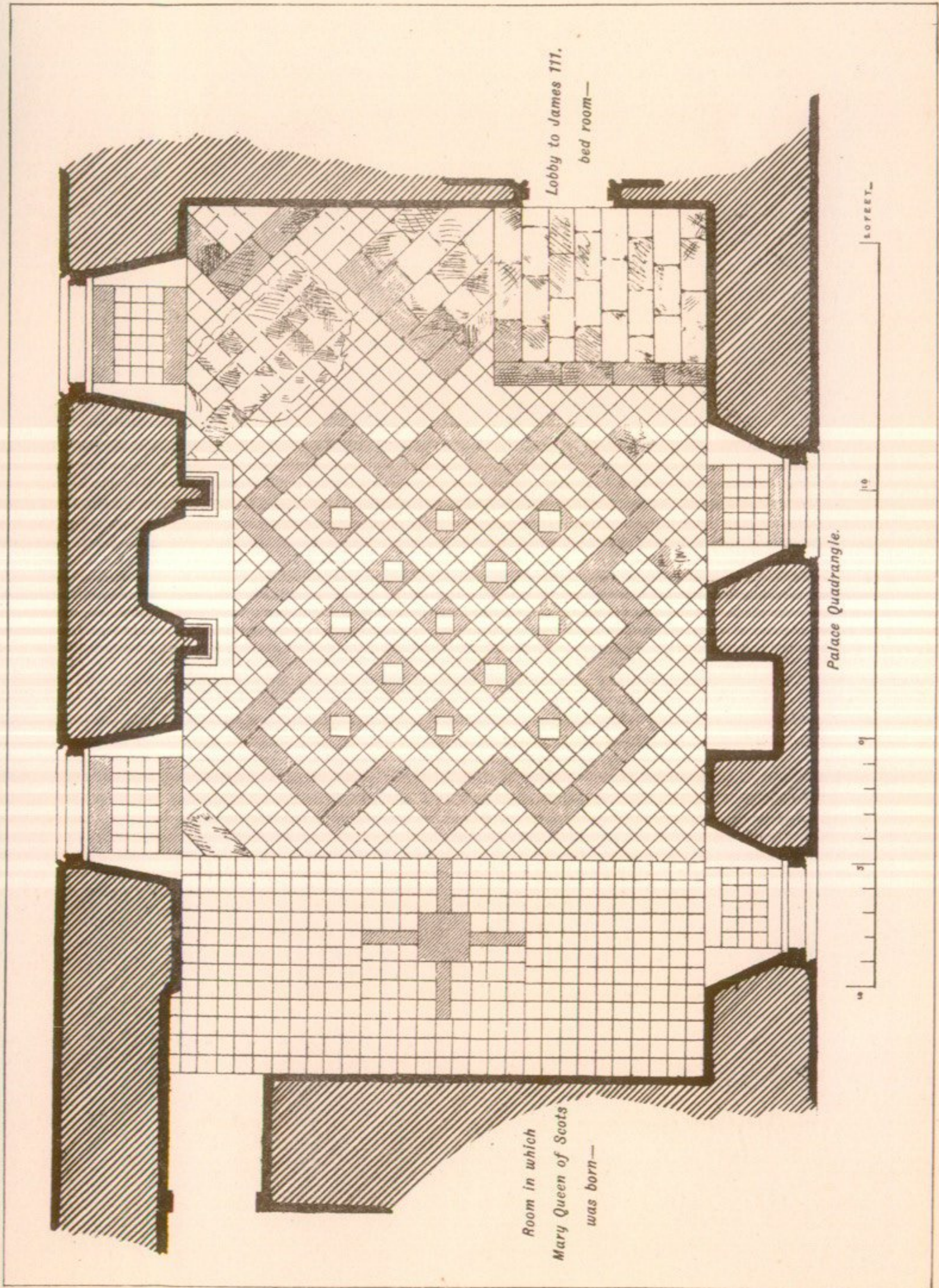
I.

NOTES OF ANCIENT TILE PAVING IN LINLITHGOW PALACE.

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When visiting the ruins of Linlithgow Palace about twenty years ago, my attention was attracted to several polished paving stones, apparently systematically arranged, in the floor of one of the apartments situated on the west side of the quadrangle, upon the principal or first floor up. On clearing away a portion of the moss and weeds, which formed a general covering, it was found that the stones were combined with tiles of different colours, forming a very interesting and beautiful design of flooring, extending over the entire apartment. (See the accompanying Plate.)

The materials of which the pavement was composed were much broken, especially the tiles, many of which were inserted in the stones, and what remained were chiefly in small pieces, with much of the surface splintered



LINLITHGOW PALACE.

PLAN OF PAVING IN APARTMENT WEST SIDE OF QUADRANGLE.

and scaled off, being evidently the result of the accidental burning of the Palace in 1746, when it was occupied by Hawley's Dragoons. Any attempt to remove or reset the tiles would probably incur the risk of obliterating the design, as the glazed colour could be traced on some of the broken fragments, which are still carefully preserved in their original position. On examining the other apartments, a fragment was found remaining of the tile floor of the domestic chapel (fig. 1), situated on the

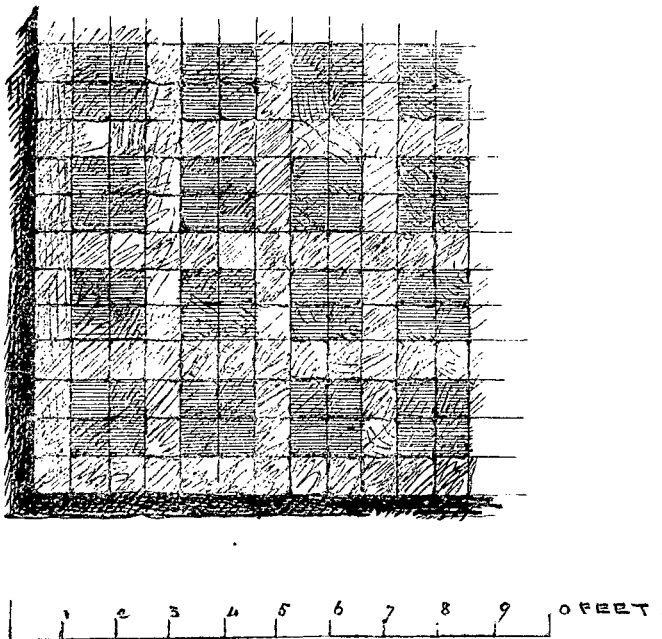


Fig. 1. The Tile Floor of the Chapel, Linlithgow Palace.

same floor, upon the south side of the quadrangle. The tiles of both apartments are in two colours, about 8 inches square, and fully 1 inch thick, the upper surface of one being covered with a thin glaze of a light orange colour, and the other a reddish brown. The surfaces of several of the

tiles in the apartment upon the west side are stamped with a shield bearing the letters T. M.—interlaced by a cord, as shown in the accompanying engraving (fig. 2) from the impression. After repeated and

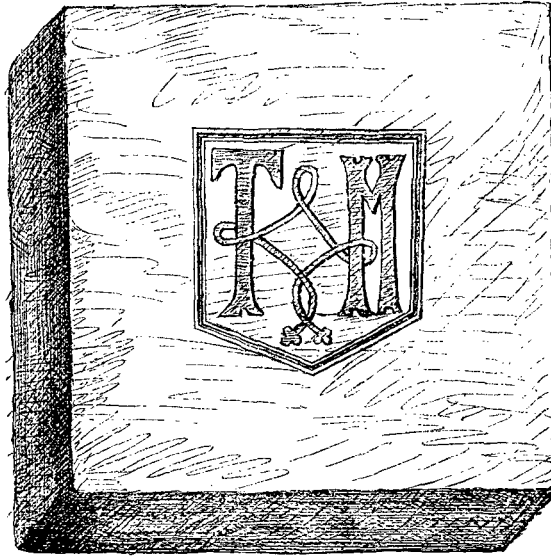


Fig. 2. Tile from Linlithgow Palace.

careful examinations of the two floors, drawings were prepared, showing the peculiar arrangement of each. The paving of the chapel with tiles is in accordance with the practice of early times. But the apartment on the west side is apparently the only other in the palace which has been paved with tiles, and its paving is peculiar both in its design and position. No designation has been given to the room by tradition. Its length is 35 feet by 21 feet wide and 19 feet high, connected by a door to a room at the south end, pointed out as that in which Mary Queen of Scots was born, and at the north end communicating with a lobby, from which James III.'s bedroom enters, and a stair from the courtyard. The apartment has originally been lighted by four tall

circular headed windows, two on each side, the lower part to the height of 3 feet being formed with shutter boards only, having a cornice or transom, on which rested glazed lattice work for the upper part, secured at the sides to the stone, but fitted with inside shutters to exclude the light when required. At some more recent period a narrow oblong window has been formed near the ceiling, in the wall next the courtyard, being about 16 feet long and 2 feet high, with deep splays both inside and out, and supported in the centre of the wall by stone mullions, dividing the length into fourteen equal spaces, by which, when the shutters of the lower windows were closed, the apartment could be fully lighted without the parties occupying it being seen from the outside. At the north entrance, the space shown by the stone pavement appears to have been enclosed by a screen, with a side door. The markings upon the walls indicate that the lower part has been finished with timber work, and the upper hung with tapestry.

The sides of the fireplace have deeply moulded pillars, with richly carved capitals, upon which remain some orange, red, and black colouring.

On looking into the adjoining south room, where it is said Mary Queen of Scots was born, it is observed that a similar arrangement of windows has been carried out, and in the jamb of the lower window is an entrance to a private stair leading to a hall on the ground floor, communicating with the courtyard and the prison in the south-west tower. Considering the design of the paving, the arrangement of the apartment, and its connection with those adjoining, it is probable that it was intended for an audience or state council chamber.

It is difficult to fix the period when these floors were paved, but in vol. i. of the "Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland," edited by Mr Thomas Dickson of the Record Department in the General Register House, we find it stated that the peel or south-west corner tower was erected by Edward I. in 1302, and the additional buildings which had grown up around it, with the parish church, were destroyed by fire in 1424. In 1425 the building of a new palace was begun, and actively

carried on till 1451. This probably was the west side. In 1467 the work was resumed, and during the next four years considerable sums were expended upon it. The south side of the palace appears to have been erected between 1488 and 1496, as reference is made in the accounts to timber for the roof of the chapel. In the "Exchequer Rolls," vol. iv., edited by Mr George Burnett, Lyon King at Arms, there are under date 1428 two entries for tiles, distinguished as stone tiles for the king's fabric, and six pounds worth of tiles for the said fabric at Linlithgow, sent from Dundee. These were supplied when the buildings on the west side were in progress. In 1429 they appear to have been habitable, as the king spent four days there. There is no doubt that the "stone tiles" were for the roof, and it is possible that the others, simply called "tiles," may have been for paving the floor in question. It may be objected that Scotland was not sufficiently advanced in such ornate domestic architecture at that period; but we have the report of Don Pedro de Ayala, the Spanish ambassador at the court of Scotland in 1497-8, stating that "The houses are good, all built of hewn stone, and provided with excellent doors, glass windows, and a great number of chimneys. All the furniture that is used in Italy, France, and Spain is to be found in their dwellings. It has not been bought in modern times only, but inherited from preceding ages."

I believe that sufficient attention has not been paid to this subject hitherto, nor to the ancient arrangement in placing the tiles, and this paper is introduced with the view of awakening a deeper interest and more careful observation and examination of such specimens as may be met with. Many have already been turned up and placed in the Society's Museum, which may be classed under three heads, viz. :—

Plain glazed tile, in yellow, orange, and olive colours; encaustic, or inlaid tile, in brown, white, and buff colours; brown glazed, raised figured tile, some of which have been found applied as wall linings, in recessed backs of lavatories, &c.