

I.

NOTICE OF CARVED OAK PANELS WHICH WERE FORMERLY IN THE CHAPEL OF THE FRANCISCAN NUNNERY IN DUNDEE. BY JOHN SHIELL, F.S.A. Scot., DUNDEE.

These panels were removed about the end of last century from the old building known as the Franciscan Nunnery, which was situated on the north side of the Overgate of Dundee, and on the east side of the street which in former times went by the name of the Friars' Vennel or Wynd, as it formed the access to the Black and Grey Friars' Monasteries, but which is now known as Barrack Street. The nunnery was at some little distance from the Overgate, and the garden of the nuns extended down to that street. In process of time, however, the garden was built over, and the nunnery, as known to the more recent generations of the inhabitants of the town, stood at the top of a narrow entry called the Methodist Close. This building, previous to its demolition, was the only one of the religious houses of Dundee that had the fortune of being spared until our time. An account of this ancient tenement is given by Mr James Maclaren, in his edition of Thomson's *History of Dundee*, which I shall quote :—

“The congregation of Grey-Sisters, otherwise Claresses, nuns of St Clare or Franciscan Monachæ, occupied a large building at the top of Methodist Close, which was pulled down in 1869, on the opening of Bank Street, to make way for the new buildings then erected by Mr Buchan. The old building was lofty, and formed three sides of a square enclosing a very small court, the eastern side being only two flats in height. The ground floor of the west and north sides was vaulted, the east side occupied with three arches, in the nature of a cloister or covered walk, in which the sisters had taken the exercise of walking during inclement weather. Above the vaults on the north side there was a large hall, which before the Reformation might have been the chapel of the nunnery. Towards the end of last century it was used by the Society of Methodists as a place of worship (from which circumstance the name of the close is derived); afterwards as a coach-

builder's workshop and a schoolroom. Latterly it was acquired by the Hammermen Corporation, and occasionally used by the unbeneficed preacher, the itinerant salesman, the philosophical lecturer, and not unfrequently it has been the scene of stage-struck follies of would-be Edmund Keans and Fanny Kembles. Another apartment above this was long used as a place of devotional meeting by a small society of Christians who called themselves Bereans, or were so called by others; and formerly, when the hall below was a schoolroom, it was used by a small body, chiefly people well advanced in years, as a place of religious exercise, and who, from wearing broad blue bonnets, were familiarly called the 'Bonnet Meeting.'

"Some Latin and Greek scriptural quotations were to be seen on a large stone in the north wall of the chapel; and within a recess in the south wall, ornamented with columns, the holy water laver was placed, with a gutter through the wall for draining off the water; and within an elliptical wreath of flowers and foliage there was inscribed, in Roman capitals of good formation, the following devout ejaculation, 'LORD WASH OVR SOVLS IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.' Besides the apartments on the same floor with the chapel, there were a number of others on the upper floors, supposed to be the dormitories, refectory, &c., of the establishment, but of how many individuals the sisterhood consisted is unknown, neither can it be stated at what time or by whom it was erected, nor how endowed, beyond a single acre of land at the West Port, and a small bit beside it called the Grey-Sister's Acre. On the *putt* stones of the back gables of the house the date 1621 occurred; but this merely shows that it had been repaired in that year by a secular proprietor, and probably by one of the Forresters of Millhill, it having long been the town house of that ancient and now extinct family, and from them denominated 'Millhills Lodging.' On several of the attic windows there were considerable remains of sculpture, including some traces of heraldic figures. As there are no records existing of the revenues of the house, we think we are justified in concluding that at the Reformation it passed to a descendant of the founder, or had been given to some other private person before the general grant in favour of the town. The entry to the nunnery from the Overgate by the Methodist Close, at the top of which

there was a small gateway, was very simple and wholly unadorned, and surmounted with a platform of stone."

Mr Andrew Jervise also refers to the building in his *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*:— "The convent is believed to have been situated in the Overgate, and a large pile of building at the top of Methodist's Closs is said to be the old abode of the nuns. The rooms of the house, now occupied by a number of poor families, are large and lofty; the ancient hinges yet on some of the doors are of pretty floral patterns; but a stone on the back of the building bears the date 1621, a period long subsequent to the abolition of monasteries in Scotland, and to that date the style of the building corresponds. It is therefore more probable that this house had rather been built as the private residence, either of a country gentleman or of a wealthy merchant. Perhaps the remains of the monastery, if any such exist, are the four vaulted apartments on the east side of the same entry, supported by rude but not inelegant pillars."

It would appear that Mr Jervise had been misled by the date which he observed on the building, and has consequently formed the opinion that this was not the convent, but a house subsequently erected on its site. I am satisfied, however, that the local tradition is correct, and that this old building was the actual nunnery. Mr Maclaren, who is not only a professional architect, but is well acquainted with ancient architecture, made a careful examination of the building before its demolition, and the remains of the piscina or lavatory on the south wall of the chapel, and the scriptural quotations, to which he refers in his description, indicate that he is correct in holding that the venerable pile was the old convent, and that the date referred to the time of some subsequent repairs. I may add, in corroboration of this view, that there was a large square shallow recess with a gabled top in the middle of the principal part of the building, on the north side of the small court, above the windows of the second story, which contained a *pietà*, or figure of the Virgin supporting the dead Christ on her knees, which was carved in high relief. This sculpture, though much worn and decayed by time, could be distinctly made out down to the date when the building was demolished.

I should state that the small gateway which formed the entry to

the nunnery from the top of the Methodist Close, and which Mr Mac-laren mentions, was surmounted with a platform protected by battlements pierced with loopholes for firing down the close. Over the gate was a recess, which formerly had contained a coat of arms, very likely that of the Millhill family, as the gateway was of a time subsequent to the Reformation, and probably of the seventeenth century.

The monasteries and other religious houses in Dundee were dissolved in 1560, and I can find no reference to any incident in connection with the nunnery, other than the single fact mentioned in Walcott's *Scoti Monasticon*, that one of the nuns was slain on that occasion. This would indicate either that they were treated with needless barbarity, or that they made a strenuous effort to protect their home, and had to be expelled by force. That in no case were they gently treated, can easily be imagined when we remember the violence of the Dundee contingent, who assisted the mob of Perth to destroy the Abbey of Scone in June of the preceding year.

The panels were removed from the Convent Chapel, I am informed, between eighty and ninety years ago, and this would be about the time when the chapel was converted into a Methodist place of worship. When I acquired them they were painted over with a thick coating of a light brown colour grained to resemble oak. I hesitated for some time to remove the paint, as I feared that the carvings might show extensive repairs. I however at last determined to have them cleaned, and the result has been very fortunate, as the panels now appear not only in a very good condition, but many delicate details of the carving are brought out which were formerly concealed by the paint. Indeed, the carvings are, with the exception of a few slight fractures, in a state of the most perfect preservation, and as fresh and beautiful as if they had just left the hands of the carver, and this is doubtless owing in great measure to the protection afforded by the paint.

The panels are four in number, and represent three scriptural subjects, and the Royal Arms of Scotland. The scriptural subjects represented are—

1. The Judgment of Solomon;
2. The Annunciation; and
3. The Wise Men from the East visiting the infant Saviour.

The Judgment of Solomon.—This panel (fig. 1) measures 22 inches by 29½ inches. The king is represented seated on a throne, clothed in a



Fig. 1. Carved Oak Panel—the Judgment of Solomon.

long robe with short sleeves, which show the long sleeves of an under garment. On his head is a cap or crown, inscribed "Salomon." He

has a long forked beard, and in his right hand holds a sceptre, the upper end of which has been broken off; and with his left he points towards the mother of the living child, who kneels before him with the dead child lying in front of her. The whole expression of the king is full of dignity, while he listens attentively to what the woman is saying. She is clad in a mantle with very wide sleeves, and has a dress with a low-cut body showing a habit shirt, called at that time a partlet, of some delicate material, which ends in a ruffle round her throat. On her head she has a large cap banded across in a diagonal pattern resembling a turban, and her hair is confined by a net. She holds her hands forward, and her attitude is one of anxious entreaty. Behind her stands the other woman, somewhat similarly attired, but wearing a closely-fitting cap, which terminates in a point or bow over her forehead. She appears to be listening to her rival. In the background stands the soldier or attendant, a remarkably handsome young man, with short curly hair and moustache, and wearing on his head the flat bonnet similar to those depicted in Holbein's drawings of illustrious persons of the Court of Henry VIII, and long afterwards known in London as the "flat city cap." He is clothed in a short jacket richly embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, and has loose breeches reaching to his knees, and long tight-fitting stockings or hose. He holds the living child round the waist with his right arm, and rests his left hand on the hilt of his sword. I should mention that the side of the king's throne is decorated with two panels, on which is carved the linen pattern, a well-known late Gothic ornament. The lower part of the throne is adorned with Renaissance scroll-work, while a canopy rising projects over his head, from which is suspended a globular ornament.

The Annunciation.—This panel is larger than the others, and measures $31\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 30 inches. The Virgin is facing the spectator, and kneeling at a desk or lectern with her hands placed together in a devotional attitude. She has on a long loose robe. Her hair is long, flowing in ripples over her shoulders, and her head is surrounded by a nimbus. She has an open book in front of her, resting on the fringed cushion of the lectern, and above her is a square canopy with a fringe, decorated with squares resembling stone-work. From that a curtain falls behind her forming

a background, and another is looped up into a long knot. At the other side of the panel is the angel arrayed in a loose robe gathered in at the waist, and fastened at his neck with a brooch. He has large wings, and holds his right hand forward, with the first and second fingers extended in the act of blessing, and in the left hand there is a very long sceptre with a scroll round it. At the upper corner of the panel behind the angel is a cloud, and behind his head is a figure with rays like the sun, and beams of light proceeding from the cloud pass behind this figure in the direction of the Virgin. At the feet of Mary, and between her and the angel, on a low stand, is a vase containing three lilies. The side and front of the lectern at which she is seated are ornamented with a row of recessed panels, with circular heads resembling small windows.

The Wise Men or Magi.—This panel (fig. 2) measures 22 inches by 29½ inches. Here the Virgin is seated on a very richly decorated seat, ornamented in the Renaissance style, with a canopy overhanging her head. At each side are curtains, which are looped back. In front of the top of the canopy is carved, as an ornament, the head and wings of an angel terminating in scroll-work. This is placed between two small Gothic pinnacles, the one of which nearest the spectator had been originally fixed on with pegs, but it has become detached and is now wanting. The Virgin is clothed in an embroidered gown, and her head is covered with a veil which falls behind her. Her face is somewhat heavy, and void of expression. On her knees she holds the infant Saviour, who has in his hands a small casket, and at his feet on the ground is a royal crown. Above the seat, in the corner of the panel, appears the star. In front of the Virgin and Child are the three Magi. The one nearest the spectator is an old man, with a beard, whose dignified aspect is somewhat impaired by his nose being injured, owing to a joining in the panel. He is clothed in a loose robe, and kneels on one knee, and is offering a covered cup or chalice to the Child with the one hand, while he removes the lid with the other. Behind him is another old man, also with a beard, whose appearance bears a close resemblance to the old man I have just described. His head and shoulders are alone visible and he leans forward, and holds out a cup towards the infant Saviour. The head of

this figure seems as if it had been fixed or glued on, and the wood forming it is of lighter colour than the rest of the panel; the carving



Fig. 2. Carved Oak Panel—the Adoration of the Magi.

also is not so delicately executed. This leads me to think that this head is a restoration, and that it is copied from the head of the figure

I have first described, as I do not think it likely that the artist who executed the work would make the mistake of representing two of the magi as almost exactly alike. Behind these two stands the third, a very beautiful and interesting figure, representing a young man with short cut hair, gorgeously attired in a quilted doublet showing an under garment with deep scalloped edges, and puffed, slashed, and ruffled sleeves, and above, at the neck, a plaited shirt with a frill. His legs are incased in tight-fitting hose gartered below the knee, and he has on his feet shoes with broad square toes ornamented with little slashes. At his side is a sword, and on his head is a crown. He holds in his long delicately-shaped hand a casket decorated with little crosses, and seems to stand modestly back while his elder companions present their gifts. In the background there is a church with round-headed windows, and a cross on the top of its gable. In connection with this panel, I may mention that in the Friary Church of the neighbouring Franciscan Monastery, there was an altar dedicated to the three Kings of Köln, as the Magi were commonly called from the stately Minster on the banks of the Rhine, of which they were the patron saints.

The Royal Arms form the subject of the last panel (fig. 3), which measures, like the previous one and the Judgment of Solomon, 22 inches by 29½ inches. This is in some respects the most interesting of the series. The shield or escutcheon is surrounded with a curved border of Renaissance character and very elegant design, and bears the well-known arms of Scotland, the lion rampant within a double tressure flowered and counter-flowered. At either side of the escutcheon are the unicorns gorged with crowns and chained, the crowns adorned with fleurs-de-lis; and below is the thistle with four flowers on long stalks, and three leaves placed alternately in the form of a fan, the two lower flowers being under the feet of the unicorns. Behind the supporters are two spears, the lower ends of which pass through large rings at the ends of the chains. On the escutcheon is placed a royal helmet, on either side of which are two ostrich plumes instead of a mantling. On the helmet is a royal crown, arched over and the rim raised or ornamented with fleurs-de-lis; and on the crown is the crest, a lion sejant affronté, imperially crowned, holding in the sinister paw a sceptre; the dexter

paw, which formerly held a sword, has been broken off. Above the achievement is the scroll, bearing the motto, the ends of which are

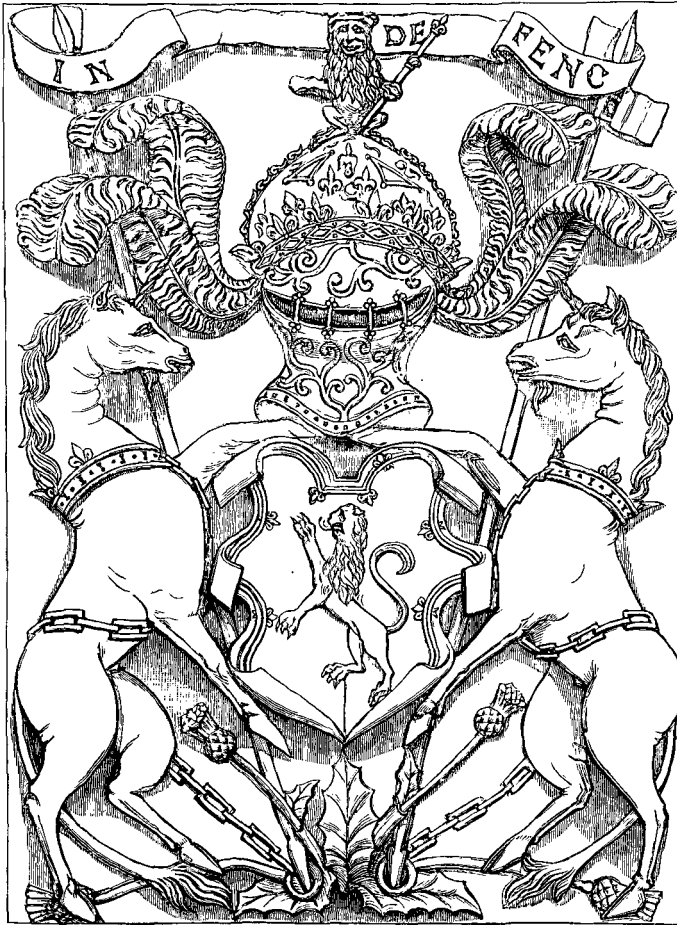


Fig. 3. Carved Oak Panel—the Royal Arms of Scotland.

turned round the points of the spears. These ends project from the

panel, and have been broken and subsequently repaired, and the motto recut on the new portions. It now appears as IN DEFENC in place of IN DEFENS, the old way of spelling the motto. The only letters which are original are the I and DE.

From the description given above, it will be seen that the panels are very interesting examples of carved wood-work of the sixteenth century; and as the nunnery was dissolved in 1560, they must have been executed before that date. At the commencement of that century the Gothic style in architecture and decoration still prevailed, but in a few years the great wave of the Renaissance reached our shores, and the new style gradually superseded the old until about the middle of the century, when it entirely supplanted it. The transition between the styles is seen in the carvings. In the panel I have first described, the Judgment of Solomon, the Gothic ornament of the linen pattern occurs on the side of the king's throne, and on the foot is seen Renaissance scroll-work. Also on the panel representing the visit of the Magi are seen two small Gothic pinnacles on the top of the canopy over the Virgin's seat, the other decorations of the seat being of Renaissance design. The church in the background of this panel, with its circular-headed windows, is also Renaissance in its character. The round-headed ornaments on the side and front of the seat of the Virgin in the panel, representing the subject of the Annunciation, also belong to the new style.

The dresses of the persons represented in the panels afford additional evidence in regard to the date when the carvings were executed. The two mothers in the Judgment of Solomon have the low-cut dresses, which show habit shirts or partlets ruffed round the neck, that were the fashion in the time of Henry VIII. The soldier, with his flat cap, embroidered doublet, wide sleeves, loose knee breeches, tight hose, and broad-toed shoes, is in the dress of the same period. The same remark applies to the youthful crowned figure in the representation of the Magi. He has a quilted doublet low at the neck, and a "pinched" or plaited shirt. The sleeves of his under-coat are elaborately puffed, slashed, and ruffled, and his broad shoes are adorned with little slashes at the toes. His whole dress, in fact, is that of a royal or noble person of that time.

No one under the rank of a knight was entitled to have a "pinched" shirt, according to the sumptuary laws of that monarch. If these carvings are of Scottish workmanship, which there is no reason to doubt, they would prove that the fashion in regard to dress in Scotland in the time of James V. was similar to that which prevailed in England during the reign of his uncle Henry VIII. The internal evidence I have referred to has led me to the conclusion that the panels belong to the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

The Royal Arms, as exhibited on one of the panels, lead me to a similar conclusion. The royal shield—a lion rampant within a double tressure flory—has been used as the arms of Scotland from at least the time of Alexander II. without any change.

The crest originally was a lion statant, but it was subsequently altered to a lion sejant as now used, and as it appears on the panel; but as crests seldom occur on ancient seals, I have been unable to ascertain when this change took place. It may, however, have been as early as the reign of James I., as on a counter-seal of that monarch, mentioned by Mr Laing in his *Descriptive Catalogue of Seals*, a lion sejant affronté is represented on each side of the feet of the king; but whether that was then the royal crest, or merely a personal badge, is not quite certain.

The first supporters used by the kings of Scotland were lions rampant gardant, as seen on the seal of James I., 1429; but two silver unicorns, royally gorged and crowned, were adopted by James IV. In the *Proceedings* of the Society, vol. ii. p. 171, a description is given of a panel on the westmost buttress of Melrose Abbey, on which are sculptured the Royal Arms of Scotland, with the date 1505, and the initials of James IV. On this the unicorns collared and chained, as now in use, appear as the supporters. Mr Stodart of the Lyon Office, in his beautiful work on *Scottish Arms*, states that James V. in 1541 used unicorns, and remarks that during the minority of his daughter Mary two lions again appear, and were still used in 1564. From this it would seem that the carvings were executed before the death of James V., which happened on 14th December 1542, and this would so far confirm the conclusion, to which I have already come, as to show

that the panels were carved during the later years of the reign of James V.

Spottiswood, in his *History of Religious Houses*, mentions that there were only two Franciscan nunneries in Scotland—that of Aberdour in Fife, and of Dundee in Angus. An account of the former, which was dedicated to St Martha, is given by the Rev. William Ross, LL.D., Aberdour, in the Society's *Proceedings*, vol. iii. p. 214. I would have liked to have been able to give some account of the Dundee Sisterhood, but I have not succeeded in ascertaining the date when the convent was founded, the name of the founder, or the number of the sisters. In these days, when public and private repositories are being ransacked for any document that may throw light on the past, I would hope that information bearing on these points may yet be discovered. I will, however, conclude this notice by bringing together such information as I have been able to gather as to the Grey-Sisters Acre, the only possession of the nuns that is known other than the convent and adjoining grounds, and give a sketch of its subsequent history.

This croft of land was mortified to the Sisters by James Fotheringham, a burghess of Dundee, and a confirmation of the grant appears in the Abridgment of the Register of the Great Seal, published by the Record Commissioners, which is as follows:—

“Apud Edinburgh 31 Mar. 1502. Rex ad manum mortuam confirmavit cartam indentatam Jac. Fotheringhame burgensis de Dunde [qua, pro animabus patris sui et matris sue, et Isabelle Spalding sponse sue &c. in puram elemosinam concessit religiosis Sororibus Jonete Blare et Mariote Oliphant, nomine reliquarum sororum religiosarum ordinis S. Francisci nuncupatarum Penitentium, et earum successoribus, capellam suam fundatam in honore S. Jacobi apostoli, cum crofta adjacente, ad occidentalem finem dicti burgi versus portam de Argilisgait, inter terram arabilem Wil. Blare, vias regias ac terram communitatis dicti burgi pro loco perpetuo dictis sororibus habitaturis et in eodem divina celebraturis. Test. Hen. Barry, Jac. Haye, Tho. Spalding, Rob. Wedderburne, And. Barry, M. David Carail et Rob. Seres, notariis publicis. Apud Dunde 8 Mar. 1501].”

Some interesting information is given as to the persons mentioned in this Deed in an old MSS. volume in possession of the town, which is described in the *History of Old Dundee*, by Mr Alexander Maxwell, F.S.A. Scot. The Book is entitled

IHS Maria

Inventarium omnium bonōr
et ornamentorum ecclesie
beate Marie Virginis de
Dunde factum et ordinatū
per honorabilem virū Hen-
ricū de Fothringhame tunc
prepositum de dunde Anno
dni M^{mo}CCCC^{mo} V^{mo} quarto.

The first portion of the volume contains, as the title indicates, lists of the ornaments of the parish church, arranged so that the articles belonging to each altar occupy a leaf; but these lists are far from complete, as eleven of the leaves have been torn out. The portion towards the end of the book contains entries made by the Kirkmasters between the date above mentioned and 1516. From these it appears that the persons whose names are mentioned in James Fothringhame's grant were themselves, or belonged to families who were, benefactors of the Church.

One entry is as follows—"Memorandum iij^o die mensis Februarii Anno Domini m^{mo}cccc^{mo}lxxxij, in pretorio de Dunde Duncanus Barry, magister fabricae Ecclesie de Dunde tempore quo Jacobus Fullerton erat prepositus, confessus fuit se recepisse et actu nunc habere quatuor libras et decem vncias de pondere trojani boni argenti ex donacione Isabelle, relicte quondam David Spalding ad fabricam vnius crucis fabricande ad vsum Ecclesie predictae, prout continetur in quadam Indentura sibi tradita; quod recepit dictum argentum in custodia, et promisit deliberare dictas quatuor libras et x vncias argenti ad fabricam dicte crucis tantum ad mandatum Prepositi Ballivorum et Consilii prefate Isabelle, presentibus jam pro tempore David Rollok Preposito, Willelmo Monorgund, Georgio Spalding, Joanne Scringiour, Alexandro

Ogilvy, Joanne Alani, Jacobo Fotheringham, de Consilio, magistro Henrico Barry et Roberto Seres clerico communitatis; super quibus Prepositus peccit instrumentum.

“HENRICUS BARRY, notarius publicus manu propria.

“ROBERTUS SERES, eciam notarius publicus manu propria.”

From this it will be seen that James Fotheringham, who was probably a relative and perhaps a son of the provost, was one of the councillors of the town. His wife also was in all likelihood a daughter of David and Isabella Spalding. That David Spalding was a merchant would appear from a subsequent entry—“Johne Lawson has payt for his layr and his wyfis, Jonet Lowson, with the silver that he suld haf had of the uncostis of the poyk of maddy that wes in pley of David Spaldingis schip, quhilk he gef her for to the Kirkmaster and the guid town.”

Another entry shows that Henry Barry one of the witnesses to the grant, was at one time Kirkmaster:—“The Preuost and Counsall has grantit til Henry Barry and till Marione of Burn, his wyf, thar laris within the Kirk or queyr of Dundee, quhar thai ples til haff thame becaus the said Henry gef to the Kyrk werk his fee that pertenet til hym the tyme that he wes kyrkmaster, and a rest of silver that tha aucht till hym.”

The following entries refer to the notaries who subscribe the Deed:—

“In November the zer of God etc. nynty and v zeris James Scrimgeour, Constabill beande Preuost, mastir David Carale and his wyffis Elizabeth Dugudis laris ar payt for to ly in the Kirk, be a sowm of silver that the toun is awand till hym for writtis makyn and his service and labor maid to the gude toun, in a part of that sowm; and the rest of that sowm zit awand till hym.”

“The Preuost, Balleis and Counsall has grantit to Robert Seres eldar, and Robert Seres zonger, thair servandis commone clerkis of Dundee, thar laris in the Kirk of Dundee, for thar service done and to be done with the bellis ringing for thame fre.”

There is also among the Burgh Charters a deed of gift by George Spalding, Burgess of Dundee, dated 6th September 1495, which is printed in the *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis*, ii. 316, and in Mr

Maxwell's *History*, from which I cannot refrain from giving a short quotation. By this Indenture David Spalding "gyvys and grantis in the honour and lowing of God Almychty and of hys moder the blissyt wirgine Maria and all the saintis of Hevyn to the Preuost Bailzeis Consall and Communitie of the burgh of Dundee till anorne and honour owr Lady Kirk of said Burgh thir thingis efter followand, that is to say ane ewcaryst of silver owr gylt, ane gryt bell, ane silver chalyss owr gilt, ane new mess buyk, ane new war stall to keyp the vestiamendis of the hye altar in till, ane gryt kyst and twenty schillingis of annual rent." In consideration of these gifts the magistrates bound themselves that the lady priest at the Lady Mass daily shall exhort the people to pray for the souls of the said George, his wife, their ancestors and successors, and after the Lady Mass daily shall pass in albs to the grave of the said George and his wife, and say the psalms De Profundis and Miserere mei Deus, and cast holy water on their graves. They also obliged themselves to cause obits to be performed yearly for the said George and his wife within the choir of the said church, all as specifically set forth in the Indenture. Further, the magistrates granted to the said George and his wife, and their successors, their lairs in the choir of the church "under the farrast gree befor the hye altar quhar the pystill is singyn of the hye mess."

From this it appears that the Spaldings were great benefactors of the Church, and it is not at all unlikely that John Spalding, Dean of Brechin from 1467 to 1500, was a member of the same family.

For a long time subsequent to the Reformation, this piece of ground, granted by James Fotheringhame to the Franciscan nuns, was known as the Grey-Sisters Acre. It was situated outside the West Port of Dundee, at the end of the Overgate, formerly called Argylesgate. Mr Cosmo Innes, in his Report in the Stipend Case, defines the ground as extending between the West Port and Lyon's Close, and bounded on the north and south by the Scouringburn and Hawkhill respectively—an area that contains between 2 and 3 Scots acres. It was included in the grant of Queen Mary, when she in 1567 conveyed to the town the manor places, orchards, annual rents, emoluments, and duties whatsoever which formerly pertained to the Dominican or Preaching Friars and Minorites

or Franciscans, and Nuns commonly called Grey Sisters of the Burgh of Dundee, to be employed for pious uses, and for "the uphald and sustentatioun of the ministerie." By Conveyance, dated 9th January 1569, the Provost, Bailies, Council, Deacons of Crafts and community, "hevand respect and consideratioun that ye puir decayit honest personis of this Burt. to be placit in ye Hospital of this Burt. or Almishous yairof is ane pairt and portione of the said Ministerie of this Burt., and that it belongs to us and our deutes for yair sustentatioun to provyd," convey to the Hospital Master and his successors the property which formerly belonged to the religious houses, and was comprised in the Queen's grant to the town. The Hospital Master found considerable difficulty in obtaining possession of the various subjects contained in the Royal donation, in consequence of claims brought forward by James Scrymgeour of Dudhope, and David, Earl of Crawford, the latter alleging that he had obtained a grant from the Friars prior to the Reformation. It was only in 1594, by the payment of 1800 merks, that the town was able to settle with the Earl for a renunciation of his rights. In this way the property of the Hospital became heavily burdened with debt, and the Grey-Sisters Acre was granted in wadset to Patrick Anderson for a debt due to him of 150 merks; and ultimately in 1612 his son George, by payment of additional 50 merks, obtained complete possession of the feu. It would appear that this croft of land was all the property belonging to the Sisters that came into possession of the town under Queen Mary's grant, as in the charter of James VI., which confirmed the grant in 1601, before George Anderson acquired the ground, mention is made in general terms of the lands of the Grey Sisters; although in the subsequent charter of Charles I., granted in 1642, while the lands of the Dominican and Franciscan Friars are referred to, no mention is made of the Grey Sisters. It is probable, therefore, that by the alienation of the ground in question, none of the property which had formerly belonged to the Sisters any longer remained in possession of the town.

I may mention here, that in 1573 a Commission of the General Assembly made inquiry into the manner in which the income derived from the Church lands were being applied. The record of this Commission was discovered by Mr Cosmo Innes in the Register House

during his investigations in regard to the "Stipend Case," and is printed in his Report. At the time of this Commission the nuns had all disappeared, but "John Broun, quha was ane of the Gray Friars, and maun be sustenit," was receiving sixteen pounds yearly.

The next notice of this ground is found in the Town Council Register in 1652, when Gilbert Guthrie "produced ane disposition of the Gray Sister Acre in his favour, and did likeways exhibit ane letter of mortification of the said Acre in favour of ane youth to be trained up at the schools in the town, whilk was subscribed by the magistrates as witnesses." This Gilbert Guthrie was a merchant in Dundee, and appears to have held a prominent position. In 1650, when it was feared that the town might be assailed by Montrose, he was appointed, along with William Rodger, overseer, to look after the repairing of the fortifications. By his will, dated 2nd June 1674, he bequeathed to the magistrates, ministers, and kirk-session of Dundee an additional piece of ground, called Westfield, for the education and maintenance of orphan boys—a purpose to which the feu-duties from the Grey-Sisters Acre and Westfield still continue to be applied.