

I.

NOTICE OF A STEEL PISTOL WITH THE DUNDEE MARK, AND OF THE ARMOURERS OF DUNDEE. By A. H. MILLAR, F.S.A. Scot.

The pistol (of which a figure is given, p. 280) is the only one of the period known to have the heraldic sign of Dundee—the pot and lilies. It bears the maker's name "David M'Kenzie," and we are thus enabled to ascertain its approximate date. The extreme length is 9 inches, and the greatest breadth over flint-lock is 2 inches. The barrel is $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches long outside and $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches inside, the bore being $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter, and the barrel $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in thickness. The exterior upper side of the barrel is divided by filed bead-mouldings into five distinct panels, each panel having a different design inlaid with silver.

Between the muzzle and the first bead a space of half an inch is hammered so as to form eight irregular sides, and a narrow band of silver, incised, encircles the barrel; whilst the three upper sides have similar silver bands arranged to form a kind of angular dog-tooth decoration. The second panel is enriched with a design formed of two hearts and two diamond lozenges conjoined by intersecting bands. It measures $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. The third panel, which is $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch in length, has a very peculiar enrichment. Between two veined leaves a heart is inserted, resting upon a small flat circle, and surmounted by a cross. Two engraved silver diamond shapes are on each side of the cross, but nearer to the muzzle, and a cypher formed of two conjoined crescents, *dos á dos*, with an engraved silver diamond shape between, completes the panel. The fourth space measures $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, and contains a silver band $\frac{1}{4}$ inch broad, apparently intended for the name of the possessor of this weapon. The fifth panel is $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, and is decorated with an engraved slip of silver bearing an interlaced serpentine design, whilst two incised silver ornaments in the form of sand-glasses are inserted on each side. The principal member of each of the bead mouldings which divide the panels has been originally covered with a silver band, chased and incised, and three of these bands still remain. The heart reappears as an enrich-

ment inlaid in silver in the butt of the pistol, and the form of the butt itself at its termination is cordate. The flint-lock is made in the usual manner, without any trigger-guard. A flattened spike, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, is screwed to the left side of the pistol, for the purpose of suspending the weapon in a belt. The name of the maker, "David M'Kenzie," is stamped on the plate beneath the pan, and the crest of Dundee appears on the same side near the butt.

An examination of the Burgh Records of Dundee has revealed some items of information regarding David M'Kenzie. In the Council Minutes for 18th September 1712, the following entry appears :—

The s^d day anent ane Petition given in be David M'Kenzie, gunsmith, shewing that where he had payed ffiftie merks for his freedome to the town for his own life, and the Petitioner is content to dress the whole armes belonging to the town for the other half of his burgiship, and therefor craving that the Council would give him a burgiss tickitt in common forme. Which Petition being considered by the Council they granted the desire of the s^d petition, and appoints the Clerk to give him a burgess tickitt according to the said Act.

HENRIE GUTHRIE, Bailie.

In pursuance of this order, the name of the new burgess was entered in the Lockit Book or Burgess-Roll of Dundee in these terms :—

23rd Sep. 1712.—David M'Kenzie, Hammerman, was admitted Burgess and Guild Brother for pay^t of fyfty merks to John Ballingall, late Treasurer, and for dressing of the Tounes Armes conforme to ane Act of Council dated 18 Sepr. instant.

As John Ballingall, here referred to, was treasurer in 1706–7, we find from this entry the exact date when David M'Kenzie began business in Dundee. He seems to have been successful in his occupation, as on 22nd September 1711 he was elected as representative of the Trades to the Town Council of Dundee, and continued to hold this position for four years. From the Register of Particular Sasines of Dundee the following items of information have been gleaned :—

John Marshall, cooper, Dundee, acquired a tenement of land at the Shore-head of Dundee from Alexander Wedderburn, town clerk of the

burgh, and at his death in 1707 it fell to his two daughters, Grizel and Elizabeth. The former was married to James Ross, officer of Excise at Newburgh, and the latter was the wife of David M'Kenzie, gunsmith. Grizel Marshall or Ross resigned her share of the property to her only sister, Elizabeth Marshall or M'Kenzie, on 25th December 1725. In April of the same year M'Kenzie had acquired a property on the north side of "the Fleukargait *alias* Nethergait," beside the Church of S. Mary of Dundee; and on 12th May 1743, "Agnes M'Kenzie daughter of David M'Kenzie, gunsmith, and of Elizabeth Marshall, his wife," was cognosced and infefted in these two properties as heir of her father. As Elizabeth Marshall is referred to in this deed as "relict of the now deceased David M'Kenzie, gunsmith in Dundee," it is evident that M'Kenzie's death had taken place some time before this date, and that his wife had survived him. We thus find him engaged in business as a gunsmith in Dundee from 1706 to *circa* 1740. As he must have attained some eminence in his trade before the Town's arms would be entrusted to him in 1712, it may safely be conjectured that he settled in Dundee at the close of the seventeenth century. The approximate date of the pistol is thus ascertained.

In early times Dundee had an established reputation for the manufacture of arms and armour. According to Tytler,¹ the making of armoury was brought into Scotland by David, Earl of Huntingdon, who is traditionally regarded as the founder of Dundee; and the fact that for centuries after his time Dundee supplied arms to the Scottish kings suggests the notion that one of his followers had settled in the burgh as an armourer, and that the craft descended to his successors. The interest which the Earl of Huntingdon took in the commercial progress of Dundee is evidenced by the allusion which King John of England makes to the inhabitants of "Earl David's Burgh" in 1199.²

The family of Muncur (? *Monceur*) of Dundee "for several generations enjoyed a high reputation as armourers."³

¹ *History of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 362.

² *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. i. p. 43.

³ *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, vol. i. p. clxxx.

The following entry appears in the *Exchequer Rolls*,¹ under date 1438:—

Et pro decem et novem garbis sagittarum, fabricandis apud Dundee, et liberatis in castro de Edinburgh, capitaneis ejusdem, de quibus respondebit, sub periculo computantis xxxj s. viij d.

The Exchequer Rolls contain many other entries referring to arms made by the Muncurs of Dundee, and there was a succession of members of that family who received an annual fee of xx lib. as armour-makers to the Court. The following are the most important of the references:—

1444.—Et pro solucionem factam cuidam Moncure de Dundee, pro harnesiis regis et cariacione xxxj s. viij d.

1445.—Et Johanni de Moncure pro armaturis pro Jacobo de Dundas, in partem feodi sui iij li. x. s.

1455.—Et Johanni Moncure, fabro armorum, de mandato domini regis sub signeto, ipso per literas suas fatente receptum super computum. vj li. xiiij s. iij d.

1460.—Et eidem, per solucionem factam Willelmo de Muncur, pro feodo suo, ut patet per literas domini regis sub signeto et subscriptione manuali ejusdem ostensas super computum iij li. vj s. viij d.

1466.—Et eidem, per liberationem factam Willelmo Muncur, factori armorum, pro factura eorundem, domino nostro regi, de mandato ejusdem literatoris sub signeto ostenso super computum iij li.

1471.—Et eidem per solucionem factam Willelmo Muncur, factori armorum jam defuncto, de mandate domini regis literatoris sub signeto, ut patet per literas dicti Willelmi de recepto ostensas super computum xiiij li. vj s. viij d.

1473.—Et Johanni Muncur, factori armorum, pro feodo suo, percipienti in anno viginti libras de dictis custumis pro toto tempore vite, ut patet in rotulis precedentibus, de dicto termino x li.

James IV. seems to have been in the habit of procuring the greater portion of his armour from Dundee. The following entries in the Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer afford some information upon this point:—

1495.—Item, gevin to Muncur of Dundee for leg splentis and a pare of arme splentis iij li.

1496.—Nov. 1st, Item, to a man to ryde to Dundee for to ger mak arm splentis and leg splentis to the King ij s.

¹ *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, vol. v. p. 64.

1496.—Nov. 19th, Item, to Moncur of Dundee, for a pare of splentis to the King xl š.

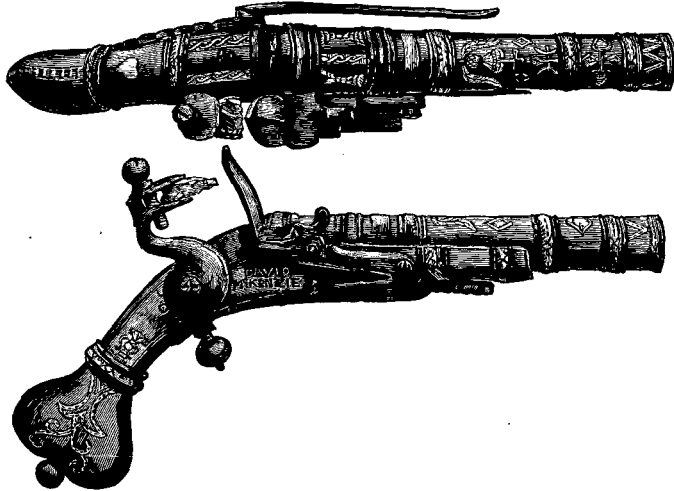
1497.—Nov. Item to Thome Foret to pass to Dundee to ger mak ane par of splentis to the King ij š.

In one of the Inventories of Plenishing at Taymouth Castle, under date 1600, the following item occurs:—

A gilt pece with the Laird's armes that come out of Dundie, stockat with brissell.

From the Lockit Book of the Hammermen Trade of Dundee, it appears that in 1587 there were 8 Gunmakers and 5 Sword-Slippers in Dundee. During the period from 1587 till 1650 there were 5 Armourers, 21 Gunmakers, and 10 Sword-Slippers. From 1651 till 1750 there were 2 Armourers, 5 Gunmakers, and 2 Sword-Slippers, but after the latter date there were no names entered with these designations. David M'Kenzie seems, therefore, to have been one of the last of the gunmakers of Dundee of the olden time.

This interesting example of early firearms is in the possession of A. C. Lamb, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., Dundee.



Steel Pistol by D. M'Kenzie, Dundee.