

V.

NOTICE OF SIX PAINTINGS ON WOOD, REPRESENTING THE SIBYLS,
RECENTLY FOUND AT WESTER LIVILANDS, STIRLING. By THOMAS
ROSS, F.S.A. SCOT. (PLATES IX.-XV.)

It will not be expected that I should enter into the history of those weird sisters whose forms loom mysteriously through the history of the ancient world. The attempt to do so would be on this occasion quite out of place. Suffice it to say that some five centuries before the birth of Christ the Roman Sibyl appears before Tarquin with her books, and from thenceforward the Sibylline Oracles were held in repute more or less in the Roman world, from which they finally disappeared, only to reappear in a new form in the early history of Christianity.

The pagan idea of divinely-gifted women whose years far exceeded the years of men—who lived in remote places, pondering on the past and the future, and who were held in the greatest awe and veneration—was first turned to account in what we may call a Christian sense by an unknown Jew of Alexandria in the second century before Christ. This writer, in the character of a pagan Sibyl and a Hebrew prophet, denounces the iniquities of the Gentile world, and gives a glowing account of the future Messianic kingdom.

“The Great Deliverer was about to arise, and the warning voice of the

Sibyl is lifted up by God's command to call on the natives to anticipate the wrath that is to come, by abandoning their false gods and returning to the worship of the one true God." ¹

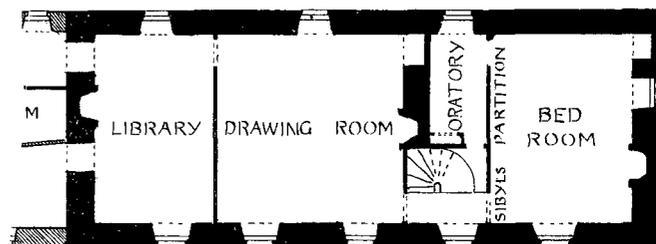
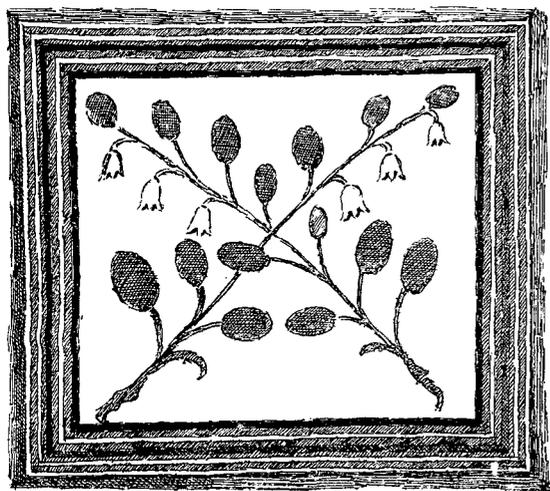
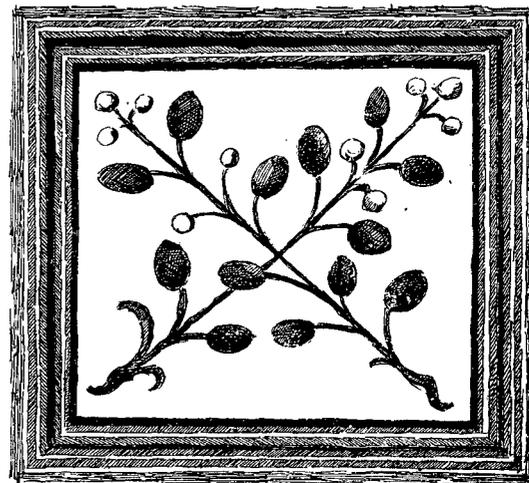
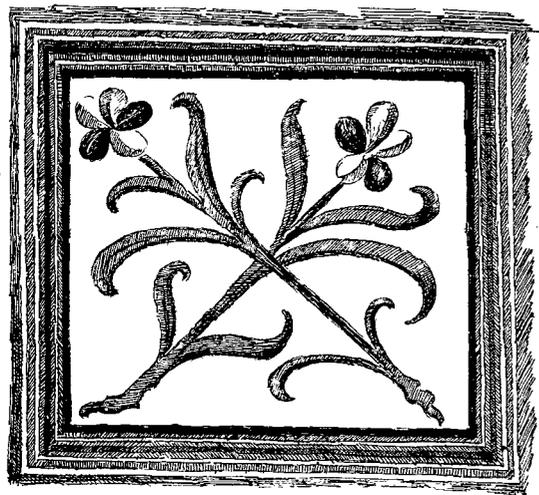
This, which forms the theme of the first of the Sibylline books, was followed in the first century by a second and third great poem. In the second the burning of the Temple and the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii ² are referred to as events of recent date. In the third poem of the same period the writer assumes the character of an Egyptian Sibyl. During the next four or five centuries we find, to quote the same writer, Jews putting on the guise of the heathen Sibyl in order to propagate among the heathen under that accredited name the fundamental doctrine of the unity of God and the hope of its universal diffusion and triumph by the hands of the great Deliverer, promised through the Jewish people to all the nations of the earth. On the other hand, we have Christians, under the same assumed name, proclaiming to Jews and Gentiles alike the fulfilment, in the person of Christ, of the promised hopes of both. Thus there grew in the course of a few centuries a great Sibylline literature, which was appealed to as divinely inspired by many of the Fathers during the second century and afterwards. The tradition of the Sibyls survived all through the Middle Ages; and in the popular hymn of the "Dies Iræ," written not later than the middle of the twelfth century, they rank with authority equal to that of David.

And as showing how widespread was this belief, I may refer to the epitaph of Devorgilla, the foundress of Sweetheart Abbey, written by a prior of Loch Leven, who compares her to a Sibyl.

But what contributed most to keep the subject in the public view was the great fame enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages by Virgil. For no part of his book was better known than the prophecy by the Cumæan Sibyl of the new Golden Age. And Gavin Douglas merely gave it a Christian interpretation as having been fulfilled by Christ, born of a Virgin, when he wrote :

¹ *Edin. Review*, 1877, vol. cxlvi. p. 54.

² *Ibid.*



“Thow art our Sibill, Christis modir deir,
 Prechit by prophetis and Sibilla Cumane;
 Thow brocht the hevinlie lynage in erd heir
 Modir of God, ay virgine doith remane,
 Restoring vs the goldin warld agane.”¹

The existence of the paintings of the Sibyls now exhibited before the Society was first made publicly known by the late Mr J. Maidment in 1866. The paintings are from the house of Wester Livilands, Stirling, and Mr Maidment's account of their discovery is that the proprietor, James Morrison, Esq., “having had occasion to make certain alterations in the interior of the house, was under the necessity of removing a wooden staircase which led to the garrets. This caused the disclosure of a passage, at the end of which was a small aperture to admit light. On each side were depicted the Ten Sibyls, with verses in black letter below,” etc.² No further notice appears to have been taken of the paintings till last year (1898), when the house and property of Wester Livilands passed into the hands of James M. Drummond, Esq., Stirling. Mr Drummond made intimation to the Society about the paintings of the Sibyls, and through his kindness they are here to-night. He has also permitted them to be copied for the *Proceedings*, and for these favours the thanks of the Society are due to Mr Drummond.

The house of Wester Livilands was an almost featureless building, and of no value as a specimen of Scottish architecture, and but for the existence of the Sibyls would hardly have been worth describing. It was a long narrow two-storey building, with attics, the rooms extending from back to front (see the Plan on Plate IX.), and had evidently undergone many alterations, including an addition at a lower level at the north end (see Plan). On the first floor at the south end there was a room between two thick cross walls, measuring about 21 feet long by 19 feet 4 inches wide. A space of about 6 feet wide, called the Oratory on the

¹ Prologue of the Sext Buik of Eneados.

² *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, x., Dec. 15, 1866, p. 467. This description is not quite accurate—there are only six paintings of the Sibyls.

Plan, was partitioned off this room, and on this partition the Sibyls were painted, showing towards the oratory. It is quite evident that considerable alterations have been made just at this part of the house. A large portion of the thick cross wall was cut away to provide room for the principal stair (quite a modern insertion). This stair passing on to the attics caused a good deal of damage to the paintings.

The partition containing the Sibyls (Plate X.) was rather a handsome one; it was constructed of oak, and was divided on the side next the Oratory by Corinthian pilasters into six compartments in the length, a Sibyl occupying each compartment above the frieze and cornice of the pilasters. It will be seen that some of the pilasters had suffered in the many changes and repairs to which the house had been subjected.

The paintings represent the following Sibyls:—

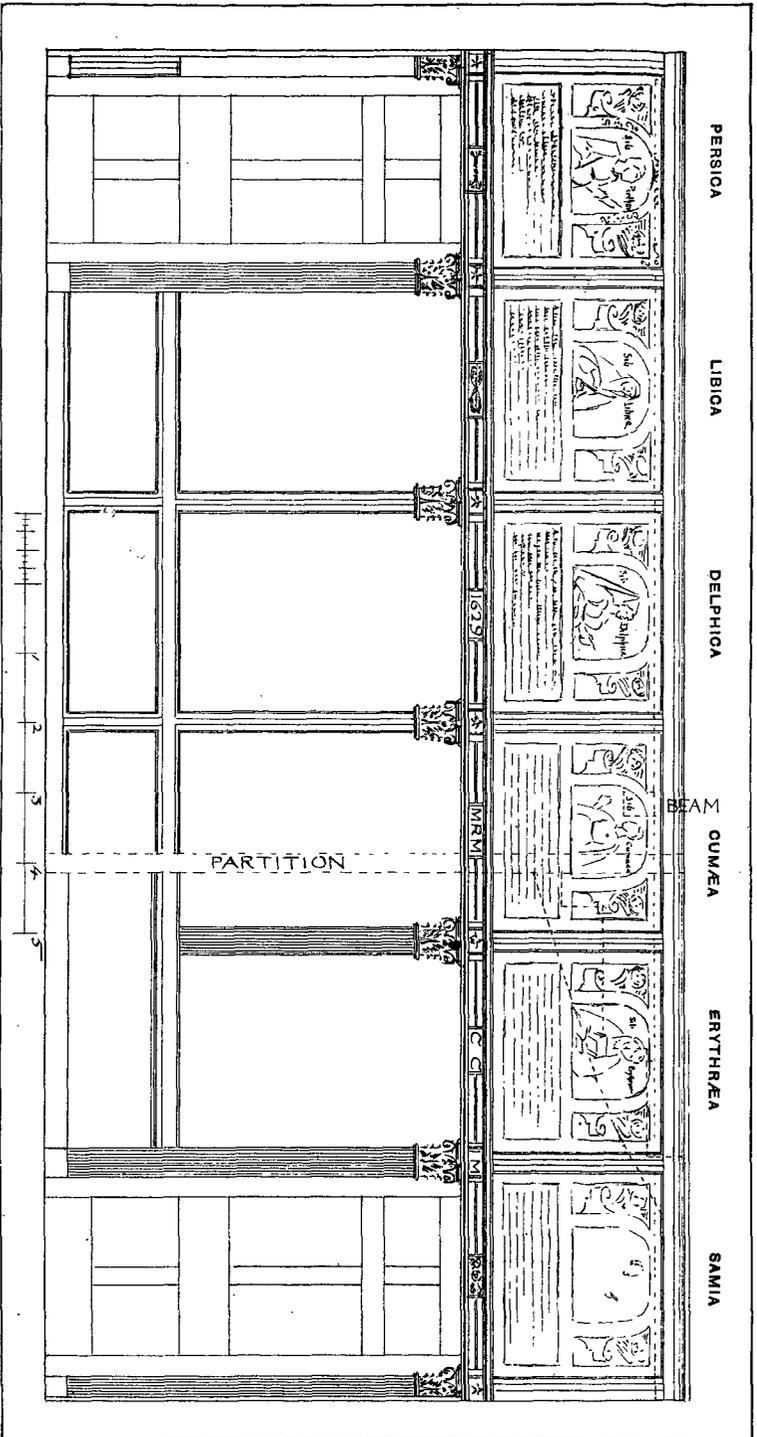
Persica. Libica. Delphica. Cumæa. Erythræa. Samia.

Although they are all in a damaged condition, still, on the whole, the first three are fairly well preserved.

The Sibyl Persica (Plate XI.) is represented (as she usually is in paintings) as an old woman, with high rounded shoulders and large features. She holds her book beneath her right arm, while her left hand, beautifully drawn, is in a raised position to emphasise her message, viz.:

“The Mother of the eternall Father and Sonne,
A mayd shall be. His Birth Salvation
Shall bring the world and life : yet farre from pride,
Though King of all, He on an Asse shall ride
Into Hierosalem, where with wrongfull wreath,
Condemn'd by wicked He shall suffer Death.”

The Sibyl Libica (Plate XII.).—A grave and reverent-looking woman, dressed in a scarlet hood or cloak which covers her head. The cloak where exposed on the underside is green; beneath it she wears a light dress having sleeves and cuffs with indications of strings of beads; round her neck she has a light blue neckerchief. In her left hand she holds her book closed against her breast, while with her right hand she seems pointing to it as the source of her prophecy, viz.:



ELEVATION OF SIBYL PARTITION

“ A King of Iewes shall the Redeemer be
 Just gentle ; guiltesse, for the guiltie He
 Shall suffer much, the Scribes with scornfull brow
 Still him forbid his father to avow
 Within their Synagogue : yet shall He preach
 The way of life, and it the people teach.”

The Sibyl Delphica (Plate XIII.).—This Sibyl is represented as a young and sprightly woman, having bare neck and arms, with full bust. She wears a light green dress edged with a yellow border, and, like the fourth and fifth, she wears a red belt or waist-band. She wears a remarkable head-dress, from which a long gauze veil streams down her back. Her right arm appears resting on her book, and with the forefinger of her left uplifted she tells her story :—

“ After long yeares due Revolution past,
 God, of a virgin borne, to Man dis-Grac't
 Shall make the Hope of Sinnes Remission shine :
 And though Almighty (and his throne devine
 Have him for Ay in Heaven) yet, His to save
 From Death will He both suffer Death and Grave.”

The Sibyl Cumæa (Plate XIV.).—This Sibyl presents a curious appearance. In some of the alterations of the building the partition shown by dotted lines on Plate X., and the attic stair, have been erected against the painting, and have thus protected considerable portions of the proper left side of the figure: This portion is now as fresh as the day it was painted, while the right half of the figure is almost gone. This Sibyl was thus situated partly in the stair and partly in the Oratory, and the latter part has disappeared, all except a mere outline. Sibyl Cumæa looks back towards her three sisters just described. She is clothed in a blue dress, having a narrow red edging round the neck and shoulders, with a green cloak, yellow in the underside. Her book is under her left arm with her right hand stretched forth with the fingers apart. Her prophecy is :

“ An age shall shortly bring about the Day,
 When the great king of kings shall lodge in clay,

Three kings conducted by a glorious starre,
 Vnto his Cradle, shal from Eastward farre
 Come to adore Him and right humble Sould
 To Him shall offer Incense Mirrh and Gold."

The Sibyl Erythræa (Plate XV.).—The mark of the stair across this Sibyl is painfully evident. The picture is considerably faded all over, the colour of the dress being generally gone with a whitish ground left, but where it remains it shows a light green with a blue hood. The drawing of the figure with the bent attitude of the head recalls the kind of work one sometimes sees in illuminated manuscripts, and agrees with the conventional style of painting Erythræa, which is to make her aged and like a nun. She wears a string of red beads round her neck, and appears to read in her open book held against her breast with her clasped hands. Her lines are :

"I see the Sonne of GOD come downe from Heaven,
 Held in an Hebrew Virgins armes ; and euen
 Sucking the milke of her pure mayden brests,
 He, in his Man-age manifold distrests
 Shal beare for those Whome His he dained to mak
 Shewing to them a Fathers care to take."

The Sibyl Samia.—This panel, the sixth and last of our series, has suffered worst of all, and is now little better than bare boards, and therefore need not be illustrated. It is probable that its position at the top of the stair landing has exposed it to the influence of the weather, and to the draught up the stair, while the sunshine from the window alongside would be sure to tell in the course of long years. Traces of the first, second, and last letters of the Sybil's name can be seen, and also of her upturned chin and mouth, with her extended hand, and the dot of red colour which occurs on the cheek of every Sibyl. Her legend is likewise almost all gone, only about the first word of every line and a few letters here and there remaining, the word "Ordinance" can also be made out in its place, and by the aid of these remains it is seen that it must have corresponded with the legend of Samia in the Cheyney Court Sibyls (to be noticed further on), which runs as follows :—



J. D. BOWIE, DEL.

Geo Waterston & Sons, Lith. Edin.

PERSICA



J. D. BOWIE, DEL.

Geo Waterston & Sons, Lith, Edin

LIBICA



J.D. BOWIE del.

Geo Waterston & Sons, Lith. Edin.

DELPHICA



CUMÆA



I see the Sonne of GOD Com: to come from H men
 Held in an Hebrew Virgins armes; and e n
 Sucking the milke of her pure mayden brests
 He in his Man-age manifold distrests
 Shal beare for those Whome His he da und a me h
 Shewing to them, a Fatherz

ERYTHRAEA

“Heavenes sacred Ordinance is now compleat
 Of brightest dayes, this is the most repleat
 With goodly rays, which shining gloriouse
 Dispel all darkness. God sends downe to vs
 His Sonne to clear ovr sight. Behovld the Immortal
 Coverd with thornes, for vs becommeth Mortal.”¹

The paintings are on wood and measure 2 ft. 10 in. wide by 2 ft. 5¼ in. high. The disposition and arrangement is the same in each. A narrow border runs all round, and the lower portion of the panel is occupied with its verse in six lines. Above this and in the centre is the Sibyl enclosed in a border with a rounded top. At each side of this border there is a scroll strap ornament of the kind so common in sixteenth and seventeenth century work, and between this scroll and the top a Cupid's head with wings occupies the space on each side. The *ground* of the verses and borders is a light yellowish tint, at the Cupid's head and scrolls a dark blue, and behind the figures of the Sibyls the ground is black. On the borders, and at the same places in all, there are scroll ornaments; these with the lettering are black. The capital letters are all Roman and the small letters are of the ordinary Old English type. The **A**'s are peculiar, being serrated on the left side. The pencil marks ruling off each line are still quite visible.

Regarding the technical process employed in the production of these pictures, the following valuable notes were prepared by Mr Thomas Bonnar, viz.: “The preparation of the ground and the medium used for the production of these panels was according to the most ancient process known, viz., *Tempera* painting. We know from testimony that it was in use by the Pharaohs, which gives it a more than sufficient antiquity for our present purpose. It was certainly the principal medium used in Scotland for fully a century after the oil medium was invented by the Van Eycks in Germany. The process is a simple one, although most

¹ Mr Maidment refers to a Spanish book which he was told was in the library of Sir William Stirling Maxwell of Pollok and Keir, Bart., as containing the Sibylline verses.

effective for its purpose, and with due care in the preparation it can be made very enduring, as we can witness by the examples of decorative work that have survived to the present day. It is, I regret to say, chiefly through gross neglect that most of these are now in a ruinous condition.

“In treating wood-work with this process, it was first of all essential that it should be quite dry. The surface was then passed over with a coating of size in a slightly congealed state. After that the panels were coated with whiting well washed and mixed with size. This was laid on with a full brush so as to fill up the inequalities in the wood, the surface afterwards being rubbed down until the ground became smooth and the whiting was mostly removed, because, if the whiting was left in a full body, it would be apt to become brittle and crack or flake off. When this preparation was carried out satisfactorily the work was ready for the decorator. Another medium employed in the Middle Ages was composed of fine whiting mixed with egg, the yolk being used as well as the white of the egg. This was all carefully beaten up and a little vinegar added to prevent putrefaction. It was then diluted as required with juice from the shoots of the fig-tree. This process was used by the Italians in special cases.”

Mr Louis Soeder, artist, has also made a careful examination of the pictures and sends the following notes :

“The wood panels have, first of all, been prepared by coating them with a mixture of whiting and size, the latter probably of vegetable origin. Upon this ground the subjects were traced and painted in distemper colour, the binding medium again being size, but albumen appears to have been employed as well. For the reds, however, oil colour has been used. The absence of gloss may be explained by the absorbing nature of the ground or the use of turpentine. The golden browns are produced by an earth, probably raw siena. The black, requiring a greater amount of the “binding medium,” has in time become rather brittle and peeled off, the softer ground below being unable to resist the curling up of the colour above, which is the result first of dampness and then a sudden

drying up. In some parts the ground has become so soft, probably by decomposition, that the black in peeling off has carried it completely away, exposing the wood below.

“The decorative panels on the back are also in distemper, but curiously, while all the bands and lines are in this medium, the subjects of the panels, conventional plant forms, are done in oil colour, and some of the semi-transparent browns seem to indicate the use of a resinous substance. The blues are, however, again in distemper (*tempera*) colour.”

The reverse of the panels, seen in the south room, are decorated as noted above with conventional plant forms, placed saltire-wise, as shown in Plate IX. The stalks, leaves, and berries are brown, with red flowers on one and blue and white on another, the ground being white with lines of brown shades enclosing the design.

This circumstance of the principal paintings being towards the little room or closet, and the simpler ones towards the large room, appears to show that it was not a mere decorative motive which called the former into existence, as they could not be seen to advantage in a closet only 6 feet wide. It therefore seems that in all probability this was a private oratory.

I may here observe that the joists over the room and oratory were originally painted with conventional patterns, but these were very much destroyed, the ceilings having at a later period been lathed and plastered.

The date 1629 is cut on the frieze of the partition, and there need be little hesitation in saying that this is also the period of the paintings. It is interesting to remember that just about this time Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, was about to begin the erection of his famous house in Stirling, and that he was issuing his ponderous and lengthy poems—poems entirely founded on the history and mythology of the ancient world, and containing three or four allusions to the Sibyls—so that the subject was, it may be said, in the air at this time. There are also numerous indications and examples to show that a genuine delight in art and colour decoration prevailed throughout Scotland about this period; and in the above year (1628-29) there was a con-

siderable amount of work being done at Stirling Palace and Chapel Royal¹ by one Valentyne Jenking, or, as he is called in the accounts, "Valentyne the Painter." He was evidently an artist decorator in business in Glasgow, and came to Stirling by command of the Master of Work. Great quantities of "Calk, Oyle, Gold, and Cullouris" were provided for him, as well as an assistant, "Andrew Home, Painter."

A great amount of heraldic painting was done by him both on stonework and boards. In the Queen's chamber the panels were to be "fair wrocht with armes, antikis, and thair af-sets," and so far as I know there is nothing to prevent us from supposing the latter to be such subjects as our Sibyls. And it is interesting to note in connection with Livilands, that Valentyne was to paint the joists of the Chapel Royal, "the field thair of blew with flouris going all along thame and antikis." He further painted three great "brodis" for Falkland.

Considerable preparations of an artistic kind were contemplated to be made at Holyrood for the reception of James VI., and the Lords of the Privy Council,² having resolved that these should be "In such decent and comlie forme and maner as is aggreable to his Majesties princelie estaite," found, we are sorry to say, that "this work could not be gottin so perfyttle and well done within this country as is requesite."

So they were obliged to enter into a contract with Mathew Guidrick, "Citienair and paynter in London," for painting and "gylting of his Majesties Chappell of Haliruidhous," and with Nicolas Stone, "carver and citienair of London," for wood-work for the same. It appears that Guidrick was to do a lot of painting—portraits of the apostles, evangelists, and such-like subjects, which were to be carved by his friend Nicholas Stone.

These preparations made a great talk both here and in London, and in a gossipy letter from Mr Chamberlain in London to Sir Dudley Carleton, he says that "Inigo Jones tells me" that he has charge of the

¹ See Extracts from the Compt of James Murray of Kilbaberton, Master of Work, *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, vol. iii. p. 369.

² *Register of the Privy Council*, vol. xi. p. 66.

whole affair, "with pictures of the Apostles, Faith, Hope, and Charity, and such other religious representations, which, how welcome they will be thither God knows." We know that they were not welcome, and Spottiswoode tells us that as the English carpenters were fixing the portraits of the Apostles, a rumour went round among the people, who protested, and to prevent an outrage (which would have been very inconvenient) the Bishops wrote asking the king "to stay the affixing of these portraits." This the king did with great reluctance, telling them "you can endure Lyons, dragons, and devills to be figured in your churches, but will not allow the like place to the Patriarchs and Apostles."

This incident, if not conclusive on the lack of artistic ability in Scotland, shows us by a striking example that caution was required in setting up in one's house such works as those we have before us. Their position in a narrow closet, probably an oratory at Livilands, appears to indicate that the proprietor was aware of this.

The existence of an oratory in this house seems to indicate that the proprietor adhered to the old Church, but, as we shall see later on, fourteen years after the date assigned to the paintings he was evidently an upholder of the Reformed Church, and as such would certainly not have had an oratory in his house.

We may here note that about 1533 Robert Reid, Abbot of Kinloss, had his chamber and oratory at Kinloss painted by one Andrew Bairhum or Bairtrum, in the light style peculiar to Scotland, as well as pictures of the saints and evangelists for the Church.¹

The chapel in Stirling Castle was rebuilt about 1593-94 by James VI. for the baptism of Prince Henry. It was decided to make it "more large, long, and glorious" than the old one was. And Robert Johnstone, a contemporary writer, tells us "that the ceiling was garnished with gold, and that the walls were magnificently adorned with pictures, sculptures, and other ornaments."² The chapel was allowed to fall into a

¹ *Proceedings of the Society*, vol. iv. p. 407; and *Stuart's Records of the Monastery of Kynloss*, p. lii.

² *Hist. of the Chapel Royal*, by Rev. C. Rogers, D.D. *Grampian Club*, p. lxxix.

state of comparative ruin, and Dr Rogers states that its internal decorations were defaced and scattered. Mr Bonnar has suggested that these panels may have been part of the decoration of the chapel. But in view of the careful design of the screen it appears as if the whole partition had been arranged for its position, and that it is not a haphazard collection of pilasters and panels, the spoil of some other place.

But perhaps the best kind of evidence we have that there was an appreciation and interest for the art of painting in Scotland is to be found in the numerous painted ceilings which have come down to us from this period—ceilings of houses and churches, painted on boards, and in a fixed situation, showing that the artists, if not always Scotsmen, were at least resident here; and the art of the ceilings generally had a very striking resemblance to that displayed on this Sybil partition at Livilands.

I have previously referred to paintings of the Sibyls at Cheyney Court, Bishop's Frome, Herefordshire.¹ Their date appears to be fixed by the arms on a quartered shield to about the year 1611. There are twelve of them (the complete number of the Sibyls) painted on panels divided by columns; on one side of the room (which is a large one) there are paintings of the prophets. The Sibyls have verses below them which almost agree word for word with those of the six verses at Livilands, thus showing that the verses are traditional—handed about from province to province and generation to generation. These other six Sybils and their verses are:

ÆGIPTIA.

“ . . . e Immortl Word shal sinnles flesh become,
His Birth shal be from a pvre Virgins wombe,
Christ sinne shal check and stubborn sovles shal chase
In vter exile from before His face;
But whome to Him Repentance bringet backe
In theyr extreames shal never comfort lacke.”

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, vol. v. pp. 152, 243; also *The Mansions of Herefordshire*, by Rev. Charles John Robinson. Hereford, James Hall. Cheyney Court Mansionhouse was destroyed by fire a few years ago when in the occupancy of Mr Alfred Monson, and the Sibyls' room was totally destroyed. I am indebted to Mr D. J. Vallance in regard to the Cheyney Court Sibyls.

HELLESPONTICA.

“ These people have not what the fvtvre shall
A rich and plenteovse harvest over all,
A Sacred Virgin Mother Mayd shall be,
Sonne of Immortal Power conceave shall shee,
He shall be God of Peace and shal restore
Salvation to the worlde forlorne before.”

PHRYGIA.

“ The Almighty Faters deares only Sonne
Once suffering death shal coldly langvish on
His woefull Mothers feeble lap, she thrilled
With sight of his deare carcas so behilld
Shal have His sovlē with sorroes terrifid
Bvt, bvt He died we in ovr sinnes had did.”

CUMANA.

“ God to redeeme vs humaine flesh sahl take,
Novght holding dearer then vs whole to make
Peace at His comming to the earth shal com,
Rest then shal flovrish, warre shal have no roome
In all the World to toile it as before,
The Golden-Age He glorivis shall restore.”

TIBERTINA.

“ At Bethleem in base and homely tod,
A Mayd shal be the Mother of a God.
He as an infant borne of Mortal lap,
Shal sveke the pyre milke of her virgin pap,
O treble blessed thov which shalt have grace
Gods sonne to novrce and in thine arms embrace.”

EUROPE.

“ In little lowly cote open forlorne
In povertie shall King of Kings be borne,
He whose sole power all riches doth dispose,
Shall bvt on hay His naked flesh repose,
He from below shall the good fathers free,
Then reascend to Heaven triumphantly !”

In June 1888 there was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries of

London¹ a set of twelve trenchers, $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter, with coloured engravings of the Sibyls with printed titles, surrounded by verses written on the wooden margin. The date of these trenchers is late-sixteenth century. The verses are in four lines, with catchwords and phrases similar to those of the verses just quoted, and the differences confirm the statement that the verses are traditional, being just such variations as are characteristic of our ancient ballads and of all oral poetry.

Generally speaking, the same theme and catchwords appear under the same Sibyl in each set, but not always; for instance, in the Liviland and the Cheyney Court Sibyls *Persica* refers to the incident of the riding on an Ass, and so does *Persica* in the London Sibyls; but it is not till we come to the *Erythræa* of the last paintings that we really get the corresponding verse of the first series. Then the *Libica* of Livilands changes with the *Cymana* of London, as does *Cumæa* with *Samia*. The *Delphica*, the *Ægyptia*, the *Hellæspontica*, the *Phrygia*, the *Tibertina*, the *Europa* of the sets generally agree, sometimes very closely. Thus in the *Europa* of Cheyney Court we have the line:

“Shall bvt on hay His naked flesh repose.”

In the London Sibyl:

“And but on hay his flesh repose.”

Somewhat in the same manner as the verses differ do the emblems in the various representations of the Sibyls differ from each other, but this subject we need not pursue, as the Livilands Sibyls have all the same emblem, and probably the most correct—an open or a closed book.

On the screens of many churches in Devonshire there are numerous painted panels containing representations of the apostles, prophets, and saints; and at the churches of Bradninch, Ugborough, and Heavintree, the Sibyls are believed to be represented.² The figures bear the

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, second series, vol. xii. p. 219.

² *Archæologia*, vol. lvi. pp. 189, 192, and Appendix. By Charles E. Keyser, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

emblems of the Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection of our Lord, which are frequent attributes of the Sibyls in mediæval art, and the belief is founded on the strength of a similar figure bearing one of the attributes with the name "Sibilla" below it being found on the screen of Ipplepen Church.

So far as I have been able to ascertain, there are no other paintings of the Sibyls on any buildings in England.

There is a series of ten paintings of the Sibyls in the library of King's College, Aberdeen. They are painted on canvas, and are believed to be the work of George Jamesone (born 1587, died 1644). An interesting description of them will be found in the biography of the artist.¹ Mr Bullock supposes them to be copies made by Jamesone when studying art at Antwerp. If this is so it is curious that nothing should be known regarding the originals. The name of each Sibyl is painted along the top of the picture thus—S. Lybica, the one mentioned being represented by a negro woman with upturned eyes, and her hands folded on her breast. Generally speaking, it may be said that the series of figures have not much of a Sibyline character about them, but have more the appearance of half-length portraits, to which the Sibyline names have been given; and although painted about the same time as those at Livilands, they bear no resemblance to them. There do not appear to be any other Sibyl paintings in Scotland.

Mr Maidment, in continuation of his note, says that while writing he had before him "a thin volume of extreme rarity, printed in small 4to, at Frankfort, M.D.XXXI., in German." He goes on to say that the volume contains seven portraits, and that those of Persica, Libica, and Delphica "are just counterparts of the Sibyls of Livilands."

It is probable that Mr Maidment wrote his account in his library, and that he had not the pictures before him, as Mr Sidney Colvin, on

¹ *George Jamesone*, by John Bullock. Edinburgh, David Douglas. I beg to express my indebtedness to Mr P. J. Anderson, University Library, Aberdeen, and to Mr Webster, No. 5 Chanonry, Aberdeen, for photographing certain of the paintings for me.

comparing the woodcuts in this German book (*Zwölf Sibellen Weissagungen*, 1531) with photographs of the Livilands pictures, informs me that they have no relation to each other. Nor, he further adds, have our portraits any relation to the Florentine or Roman engraved series of Sibyls. "They are," he says, "on the contrary, quite independent compositions."

And Professor Baldwin Brown, who kindly compared them for me in the British Museum, writes to the same effect.

Besides this Frankfort book, Mr H. Krebs, M.A., Librarian of the Taylorian Institution, Oxford (to whom I am greatly indebted for assistance and information on this subject), informs me that in the Taylorian Library there is a book entitled, *Opusculum de Vaticiniis Sibillarum*; it bears on the last page "Impressum Oppenheim," no date, and consists of nineteen leaves. Another edition of this work was printed at the same place, and has the date 1516. It consists of twenty-two leaves, and bears the title, *Offenbarung der Sibyllen, Weissagungen*. This work contains figures of the twelve Sibyls, but they are likewise quite different from those of Livilands.

There is a series of Sibyls by a Florentine engraver, printed at Rome in 1481, and reproduced by the late Mr Malcolm of Poltalloch in 1886, in which Persica has a head-dress somewhat resembling that of Delphica of Livilands. And in Mr Colvin's book, *A Florentine Chronicle*, Persica again appears with a somewhat similar head-gear, but the resemblance in both cases is somewhat remote.

The Sibyls of 1481 have verses in mediæval Latin and early Italian, and from the comparison of these with the verses of the Livilands Sibyls made by Mr Krebs, it is evident that the latter do not owe their inspiration to the Roman verses. They have the same theme—the coming of Christ—but the mode of expression and the thoughts are quite different.

The property of Livilands belonged, in the seventeenth century, to a family of the name of Murray. On the 11th September 1599, Oliver Murray of Levilands, Elizabeth Hart, his spouse, and Robert Murray, their son, on one part, and Walter Cowane, burgess of Stirling, Janet

Alschunder, his spouse, and Christian Cowan, their daughter, on the other part, enter into a contract for a marriage betwixt the said Robert and Christian.¹ Christian Cowan at this date was a widow, as in 1597 she is referred to as the wife of James Short.² Robert Murray is designated as an advocate, and it is his initials and those of his wife that are carved on the partition (Plate X.). And it was doubtless for them that the paintings of the Sibyls were made.

In 1643 Robert Murray of Livilands, out of his zeal for the propagation of the true reformed religion, left money for the supply of another minister to the kirk of Stirling.³ And in 1666 John Murray of Levyland was admitted to the liberty and freedom of Stirling.⁴ General Monk was evidently quartered in the house in 1651, when the magistrates supplied him with wine, pipes, and tobacco.⁵

The property of Livilands seems to have remained in the possession of the Murrays till about the end of the eighteenth century, as at the time of building the Episcopal Church in Stirling, about 1793, Mr Murray of Livilands was one of the two managers who stood at the "plate" on alternate Sundays.⁶ But in 1809, at a meeting in connection with this same church, although two Mr Murrays were present, a Colonel Rind is designated as of Livilands.

¹ *Calendar of the Living Charters*, Nos. 1395 and 1397.

² *Ibid.*, No. 1336.

³ *Burgh Records*, 1519-1666, p. 185. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁶ *Stirling Natural History and Archæological Society*, 1892-93, p. 8.