

IV.

REGENT MAR'S LUDGING, STIRLING. WITH SKETCHES.

BY J. S. FLEMING, F.S.A. Scot.

The roofless walls consist at present of an ornamental ivy-covered front elevation (fig. 1), with two hexagonal towers flanking an archway, extending about 120 feet across the head of Broad Street, formerly the ancient High Gaite, and, in addition to the sculptured figures and emblems, contain in the east tower the arms of Mar, and in the west those of Mar and Murray, being those of the Regent and his spouse, Countess Annabella Murray; and in the centre, over the archway, the royal arms of Scotland, with the date 1570. This is the date presumably of beginning the work, and the figure (fig. 19), suggestive of being that of the Regent himself, holds a tablet with the date 1572 as the year of its completion, and also that of the Regent's death, 28th October 1572.

Dr Honeyman, LL.D., R.S.A., architect, expresses the opinion that the original Mar building, which stood exactly in the centre of an inclosure extending from the church to a point 32 feet north of the west gable, seemed to have been commenced in 1570, and was almost, if not altogether, completed at the Regent's death in 1572. The hexagonal towers have doors in front, with internal stairs communicating with the upper storey, and on the basement three vaults or booths. The basement is isolated from the upper storey, and the centre passage through the archway has no opening on either side, nor had it a gate on the courtyard, the main entrance to the upper storey being, as he suggests, from the court side.

The eccentric genius Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who published the *Household Book of Mar*, inserts among the illustrations from his own pencil a sketch of Mar's Ludging, but it is a poor work of art and meagre in detail, and delineates none of its many character-

istic ornaments. The intention of the builder, the character of the architecture, the sculptured figures and emblems, with its significant inscriptions, coupled with the Earl's relation to the owner of the

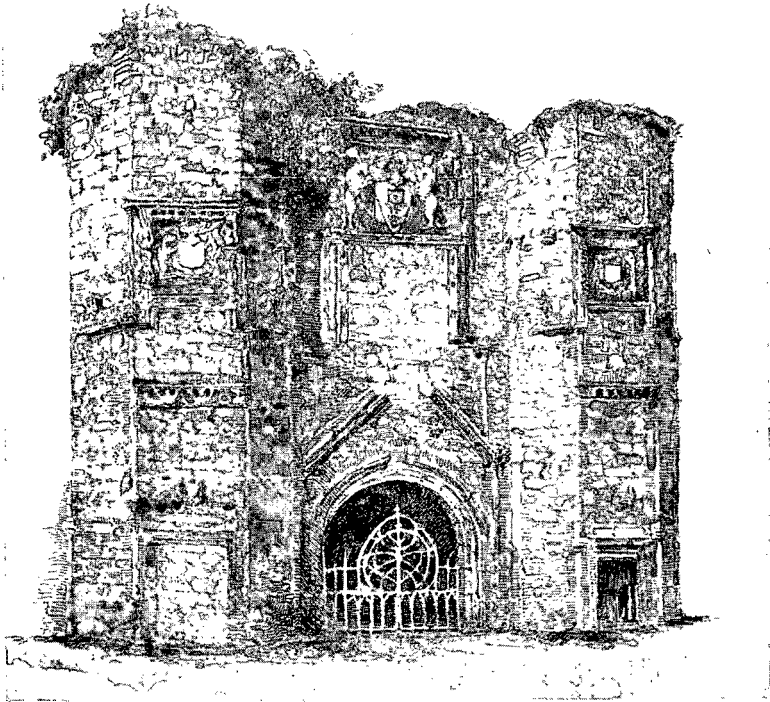


Fig. 1. Front Elevation.

then deserted extensive monastical buildings of Cambuskenneth Abbey¹

¹ David Panter, Bishop of Ross, was Abbot, drawing the revenues 1552-58, when he was succeeded by Adam Erskine, Chancellor of Glasgow, a nephew of the Regent, by grant of Mary, dated 30th June 1562. This was in implement

(of which the only remains, beyond the bare foundations, are the ancient tower and arched doorway), raised the traditional controversy, still undecided, of the mansion having been built with stones from the Abbey, ruthlessly pulled down and thus disposed of, and that a curse attending the sacrilege prevented it being ever finished or occupied by its builder. The history of its erection is certainly obscure ; but architects emphatically refute the above suggestion, and declare that all the building details have been carefully designed and executed for the positions the stones occupy, or if any of them have been so derived, these must have been altered to suit the original intention of the architect.¹ No carved stone of an ecclesiastical character is embodied in the structure ; and the inscriptions founded on to support the tradition have no such significance, but are mere moral or religious mottoes, as was the fashion of the period.

The exiled State Secretary, Earl of Mar, in his "legacy to his son," March 1725, refers to it as a good shell of a house, capable of being repaired at little expense, and made suitable for his residence should he

of a gift by her late mother to the Regent, who requested the grant to be conferred on his nephew with the patrimony of the Abbey. From a receipt by James VI., dated 10th January 1594, to David Balfour de Inschery, etc., for 34 merks for the lands of Pullis, etc., in the barony of Cambuskenneth, formerly part of the temporalities of the Abbey, and from the King being designed as in *place of the Commendator* of the convent in a charter dated 20th March 1593, the Crown had apparently taken repossession of the Abbey between Adam's demission and 1608 ; and numerous other charters refer to the King's possession. On 23rd November 1602, however, the Commendator grants a letter of mortification for support of the hospitallers in Spittal's Hospital, Stirling, and in 1604 John, Earl of Mar, the deceased Regent's son, confirms it ; but the charter formally conveying the Abbey's patrimony, and constituting Alexander Erskine Abbot and Commendator of the Abbey, by James VI., is dated at Greenwich, *31st May 1608*.

¹ Billings says, in his *Baronial Antiquities*, "A fanciful eye may justify the tradition by discovering that some of the rich decorations appear as if not intended for the present work ; but whatever internal enthusiasm may discover, the origin has no better foundation than tradition ;" and adds that "the temporalities of Cambuskenneth Abbey were not acquired by the Erskine family until the seventeenth century. His illustration (about 1852), if correct, shows several pillars and one upright figure more than the edifice now bears.

(the son) regain the hereditary office of Keeper of Stirling Castle, forfeited by the Earl's attainder in the 1715 rebellion.

The only two emblems of a religious character are the "Bambino"



Fig. 2.
The Bambino.

(fig. 2), forming with its cross bandages an upright pillar, but the face is that of an adult, and an inscription "NISI DOMINUS" under the spread wings of a cherub, a common inscription found on secular buildings at that period. Mr Archibald, a local geologist, at my request, specially examined the stones of the existing ruins of the Abbey, and compared them with those of the ruined Mar mansion. He reported that both buildings were erected of two kinds of stones and from the same quarries. This, of course, is not conclusive. In Timothy Pont's old plan of Stirling, 1620, the mansion is shown with the two towers, having their cone-shaped roofs, and the building otherwise complete; and we have undoubted evidence in the kirk-session and burgh records that it was occupied after the Regent's death, by his Countess and servants, down to at least 1598.

The form of the completed building, which authoritative architects describe as having more affinity to the Gothic style than to the Jacobean Renaissance, resembling in some respects the Palace in Stirling Castle and Falkland Palace, is left to conjecture, as no picture or engraving exists of it. It has a series of sculptured figures (life size), emblems, and monograms, as well as the inscriptions referred to.¹ A row of emblems



¹ The letter A, in many forms, appearing amongst the emblems sculptured on the building, occasions a mystery, as in no documents of that period do the Mar family spell their surnames with other than an E, with the exception of Kiligrew's letter,

on each alternate stone forms the seventh course from the lintels of the base doorways, extending from gable to gable and around the two towers; above this course, and similarly set at regular intervals, are half-length figures supporting pillars, which can be identified as cavaliers and musicians, etc., in French costumes of the period of erection, also then in fashion at the English and Scottish courts.

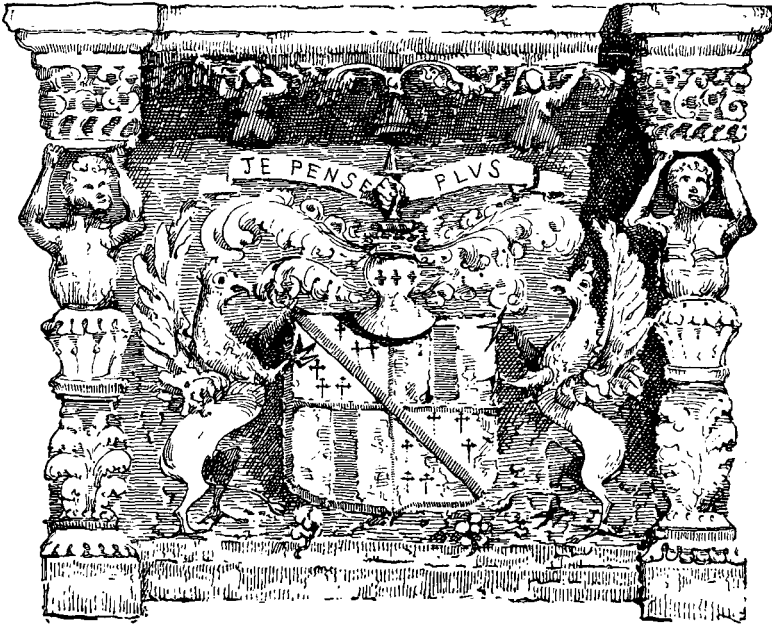


Fig. 3. Arms of the Regent Mar on the South Tower.

The south tower contains the achievement of the Regent (fig. 3) in a shield:—arms, quarterly first and fourth a bend between six cross-the day following the Regent's death, that Alex. *Areskine*, the Regent's brother, told him there was no hope of life in Mar; and John, fifth Lord Erskine's letter to John Knox, 10th March 1566-7, who signs *Airskine*. The Regent Mar's royal charter, dated 29th July 1571, during the progress of the building, is to John, Earl of Mar, Lord Erskine, and his daughter is named in it *Maria Erskine*, and so in numerous other contemporary charters.

crosslets fitché for the Earldom of Mar, second and third a pale for Erskine; crest, on a wreath a dexter hand holding a dagger erect proper, with two griffons, beaked, winged, and armed, as supporters. Motto, JE PENSE PLUS (I think more).

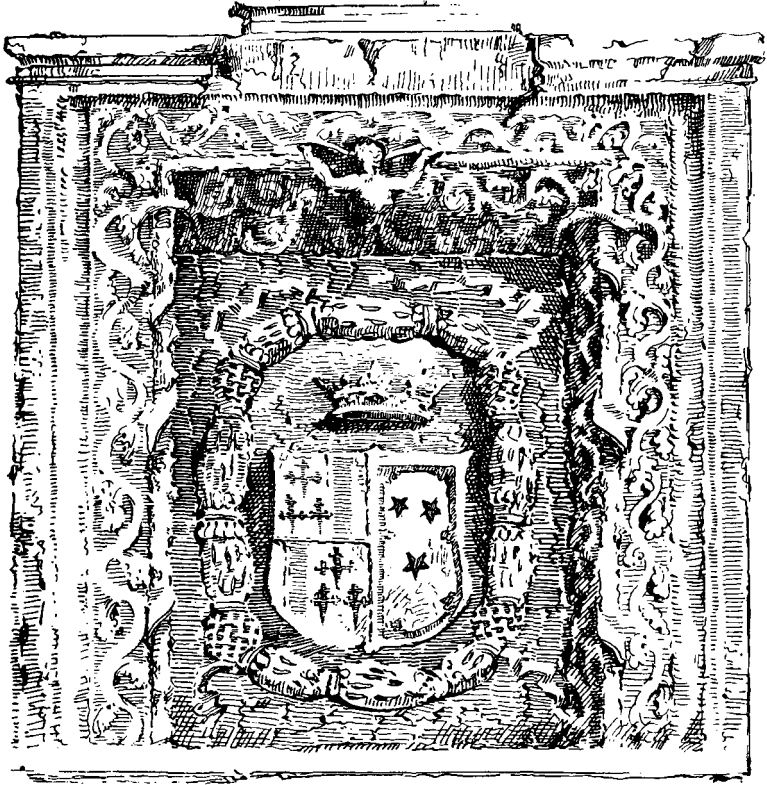


Fig. 4. Arms of the Regent and Countess of Mar on the North Tower.

On the north tower are (fig. 4) the arms of the Regent impaled with those of his Countess, Annabella, daughter of Sir William Murray of Tulibardine—three mullets within a double tressure with fleur de lis, the shield surmounted by a coronet surrounded by a wreath bound by

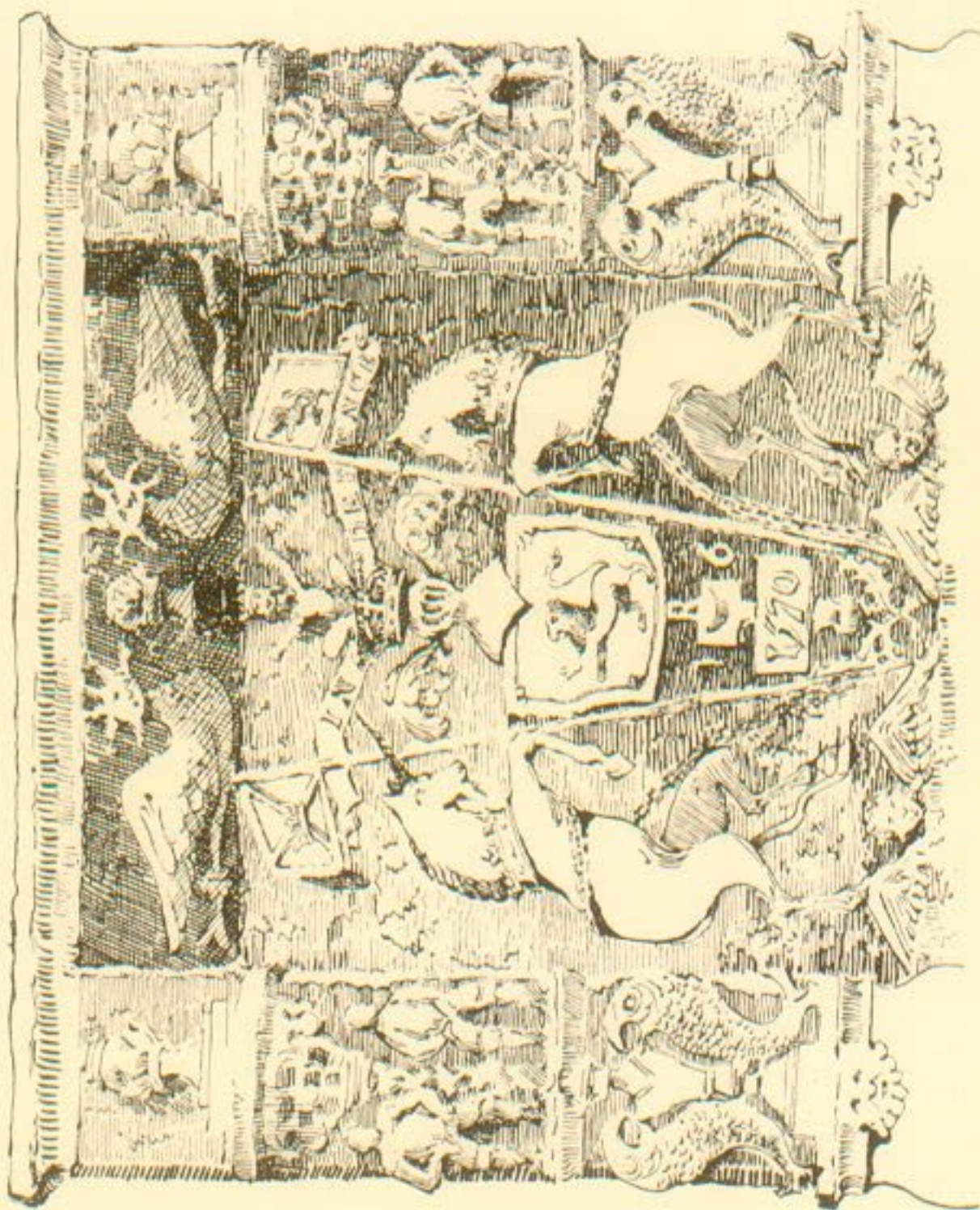


Fig. 5. Arms of Scotland over the Gateway.

ribbons, its corners intertwined. A similar ribbon-intertwined wreath is on a panel inscribed with the arms of Maria de Lorraine, "Regina Scotie 1560."

The large panel over the archway contains a delicately art-sculptured heraldic panel of the royal arms and crest of Scotland (fig. 5), the earliest public and most perfect specimen now existing so far as known. It is described in heraldic language as a lion rampant within a double tressure flory; supporters, two unicorns gorged with collars and chained, and each bearing a bannerette containing thereon respectively a lion rampant and St Andrew's cross with crown. Crest, on a cushion a royal helmet with closed visor, and over it a lion sejant affronté crowned, and holding a sceptre and orb in either paw. Motto, *IN DEFENCE*. Below the shield here are a thistle and initials R. I. 6 (Rex Jacobus VI.), and date 1570.¹

The sculptured figures are fourteen in number, viz., twelve on the building and one displaced lying in ruins at the rear, and the other with date before referred to; and although mutilated, their costumes are distinguishable.

Beginning from the south, No. 1 (fig. 6), greatly mutilated and headless, has an ornamental doublet with short skirt, terminating in scroll work, over it a short sleeveless cloak. He has his hands clasped, an attitude which shows laced cuffs.

No. 2 (fig. 7), in better preservation, shows more distinctly in detail the "peascod" doublet, with short scalloped skirt below his belt, which is ornamented, slashed sleeves with shoulder and elbow bands and cuffs, his hands resting on his haunches.

No. 3 (fig. 8) is in an apparent act of meditation, his left hand, supported at the elbow by his right, holding his chin. He has

¹ A crowned lion sejant first appears on Queen Mary of Scots' small signet (1564). There the dexter flag bears the lion rampant and the sinister the St Andrew's cross, and contains the initials M. R.; motto, *IN DEFENCE*; pendent a heart with St Andrew's cross.—(Drummond's *Heraldry of Noble Scots*.) The earliest use of unicorns in royal arms seems to be that on Melrose Abbey, with date 1506, and Rothesay Castle gateway shortly afterwards.

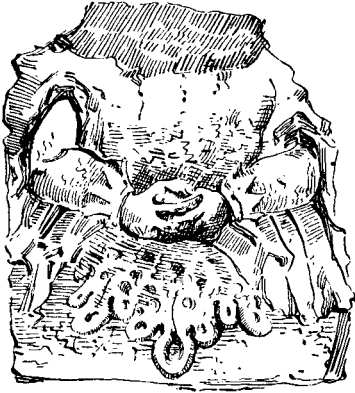


Fig. 6.

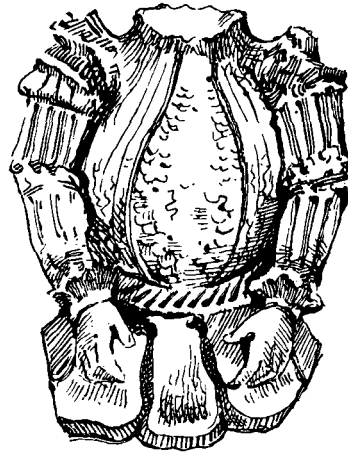


Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

a slashed doublet, shoulder-knots, and lace cuffs. His girdle or waist sash is a cord, and the two ends with tassels in front. The features are much weatherworn.

No. 4 (fig. 9) is a striking, shaggy, bareheaded and roughly-bearded Highland soldier. His right arm uplifted had a sword in the hand, now gone, and on his left is a small targe called a "roundel," which protects his breast. His dress is an ornamented tunic with epaulets, short scalloped skirt, and lace cuffs. His position in the north angle of the south tower overlooks the archway, the main entrance.

No. 5 (fig. 10). The corresponding figure in the south angle of the north tower is also a military figure, clad in armour, with open helmet called a "morion," showing his face, a gorget, back and breast plates, and vambraces. A short wheel-lock arquebus, or long pistol similar to the "dragon," is in his left hand, now broken off; the fingers of the right hand are extended along the butt, which ends in a knob, to the trigger; a powder-horn hangs at his belt. The "dragon" gave to that class of cavalry then armed with it the name of "dragoons" in the sixteenth century. It was a long pistol of 16 inches of barrel.

No. 6 (fig. 11) is headless. He has the long doublet and short scalloped skirt, the sleeves of diagonal rows of puffed and plaited bands with lace cuffs. The left arm is uplifted, the hand of which evidently held some object, but hand and object are gone; the right hand grasps the belt.

No. 7 (fig. 12). A headless musician, but otherwise fairly perfect, strumming a guitar. He wears the peascod variegated doublet with buttons and loops showing the undercloth of the slashed sleeves, a short plaited skirt, laced cuffs, and a deep waistbelt of an elaborate pattern with an ornamented buckle.

No. 8 (fig. 13). A monk, in a frock apparently of Carthusian order; the hood drawn back reveals the face, a flat collar or tippet on his shoulder, his frock in folds; the sleeves of an undercoat show cuffs, his two hands clasping what seems a dog to his breast.

No. 9 (fig. 14). A comparatively complete effigy, with an undis-



Wobbebeck Astol (1612) "Dragon."

Fig. 10.

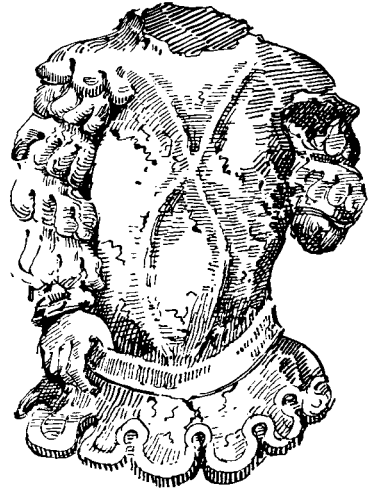


Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

tinguishable headdress, high fluted collar, row of buttons on the neck of his doublet, which has lappels depending therefrom; the sleeves are slashed, and a cord encircles his waist, ending in tassels. His right hand holds a nosegay to his breast, and his left rests on his haunch.

No. 10 (fig. 15). A headless figure holding an open book in both hands, with an undecipherable inscription on its pages. He is clothed in a plain doublet with short skirt and laced cuffs, over which is drawn a short sleeveless cloak or mantle. The few letters do not compose themselves to the words said to be on the open page, "A Revel of Love Grym," but the reading from the figure's position is difficult.

No. 11 (fig. 16), a military musician beating a side drum, is also headless. He is clothed in a tunic with epaulets, and slashed sleeves with lace cuffs; it has a double band with rows of buttons down the front; it is open at the neck, and has a short plaited skirt.

No. 12 (fig. 17), also headless, is remarkable for the length of the waist of doublet, so as at first to have been mistaken for a lady. This is open at the throat, showing his undervest, has slashed sleeves with cuffs, and the skirt a series of short flaps; the waistbelt is also ornamented. His right hand rests on his belt, and the left on the skirt of his tunic.

No. 13 (fig. 18). This headless figure, displaced from the south angle of the south tower, has a doublet with the diagonal puffed sleeves similar to No. 11. The hands clasped in act of petition.

No. 14 (fig. 19) is the figure bearing in his hands the tablet and date 1572, which is presently inserted in a dwelling-house in Craigs of Stirling, and is more than probably that of the "Regent" himself, for the reasons already given, viz., a gentleman in plain dress, bearing the date of completion of his mansion, and crowned with ivy leaves.

The other carvings and pillars which the half-length figures support are in keeping with those on the Palace of Stirling Castle, erected in 1529 by James V., to whom French workmen were sent by the Duke of Guise, his brother-in-law. In April 1539 "Nycolas Roy, Frenchman,"



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.

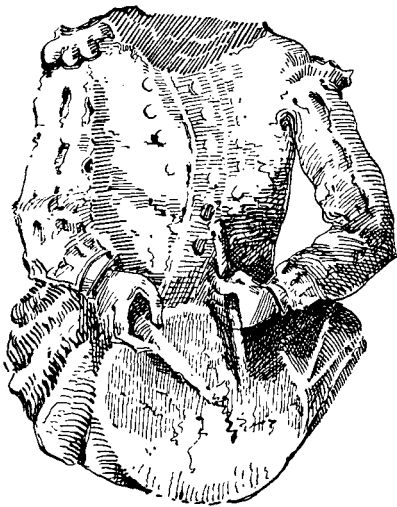


Fig. 16.

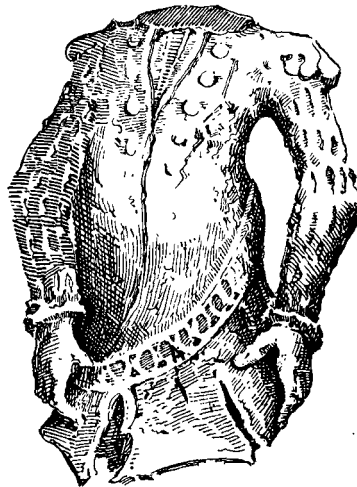


Fig. 17.

is master mason for Scotland, when "six French masons," "with miners (quarriers) from Lorain," were sent by the Duke; and in 1559 Queen Mary appoints "John Koytèll," apparently a Frenchman, master mason. We find that about the period of its erection work was being done on Edinburgh and Stirling Castles, and the author of the illus-



Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

trated work *Master Masons for Scotland* expresses his opinion that the two Palaces, Stirling Castle and Falkland, bear French characteristics, with hints of the Renaissance superadded to the Gothic, after the Parisian or Orleans type. The stones used in the Stirling Palace erection were blue, hard, and difficult of being chiselled, and came from Kingudy, on the banks of the Tay, four miles west of Dundee.

The inscriptions over the three doorways are, viz.—

On north tower—

THE MOIR I STAND ON OPPIN HITHT
MY FAVLITS MOIR SVBIECT AR TO SITHT.

On south tower—

I PRAY AL LVIKARIS ON THIS LVGING
VITH GENTILE E TO GIF THAIR IVGING.

Over rear archway—

ESSPY - SPEIK - FVRTH - AND - SPAIR - NOTHT
CONSIDDIR - VEIL - I - CAIR - NOTHT.

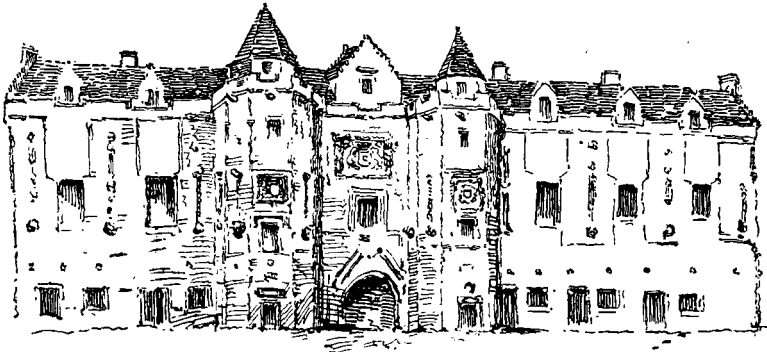


Fig. 20. Suggested restoration.

The inference—almost a certainty—is that the King's French architect or master mason is author of the design (fig. 20).

The conclusions arrived at from the foregoing facts are—

1. That the mansion was finished and occupied by the Regent's relict, Dowager Countess Annabella Murray, to at least 1598.
2. That no sculptured stone bears an ecclesiastical character, nor of fashions of an earlier date than the periods of Queen Elizabeth and of erection of the ludging.
3. That the inscriptions carved anterior to the completion of the mansion could have no reference to the public comment on a building then not existing, and are mere moral precepts.

4. That the public records of Stirling make no reference to the spoliation of the Abbey, nor of the adverse public opinion against the Regent.

5. But that, on the other hand, the two kinds of stones used in building both Cambuskenneth Abbey and the Mar mansion are from the same quarries.

6. And that Adam Erskine, the Regent's nephew, was Abbot and Commendator from 1562 to 1608, when Alexander Erskine, the Regent's son, gets a charter from James VI. of the *temporalities* of the Church, then having full right to deal with the Abbey buildings.
