

## I.

### TEMPERA-PAINTING IN SCOTLAND DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. BY ANDREW W. LYONS.

This very quaint style of decorative painting, so prevalent throughout Scotland from the beginning to the middle of the seventeenth century, seems to have been the outcome of a "craze," among the greater number of those members of the nobility and gentry who were in possession of baronial residences, to decorate the roofs of their principal apartments.

Most of these tempera-painted roofs are to be found in castles, palaces, mansion-houses and towers, or small churches, as may be instanced in the Montgomerie Aisle, Largs Church, Ayrshire, and St Mary's of Grandtully, Perthshire, which after disuse for worship were renovated with a view to utilise them—as they did—by converting them into mausoleums for those gentlemen and their spouses who were responsible for the interior decorations under their direct personal supervision, and during their own lifetime.

All these painted chambers bear some evidence, either by dates, armorial bearings, badges, or ciphers, of having been executed after the Union of the Crowns in 1603.

Although much of its execution is scarcely equal to its inspiration,

yet the work, generally speaking, is exceedingly good, its characteristic features being simplicity and breadth, and what may be termed "fearless" treatment both in design and execution all through. A few examples, however, lack that feeling which is looked for, and is most certainly to be found, in all work designed and executed by the same artist. "Purely decorative" may best describe such work, although much more interest is to be had while viewing those in Pinkie House, Largs Church, St Mary's of Grandtully, and Nunraw.

Many more, finer examples probably, must have existed throughout the country, but these, unfortunately, have now disappeared from view, no doubt partly through utter neglect, while several, beyond dispute, have had the misfortune of falling into the hands of the destroyer, as in the case of Greyfriars Priory, Elgin, where in 1897 the late Marquis of Bute was carrying out very extensive restorations.

While the different apartments in that building were being gutted, the lathing underneath the plaster-work was observed to bear apparent traces of decorative painting, many parts being as fresh as when first painted. The plaster was very carefully removed, the lathing taken down and pieced together,<sup>1</sup> with the good result that many excellent notes were obtained, proving very conclusively that more than one ceiling had borne most elaborate decoration, embracing pictorial scenes, figure-work, delicately painted, and dressed in costumes of James VI. and Charles I.'s time, and other panel ornamentation enriched with gold-leaf.<sup>2</sup> The walls of one of these rooms had evidently been decorated with pilasters, dado-moulding, and panelling. Very little remained, however, to indicate the extent to which it had been carried out, although the sketch taken of what still remained of one of the painted pilasters reveals clearly the character of the work. It was the intention of the Marquis of Bute to restore these paintings, but owing to the lamented death of his lord-

<sup>1</sup> These were pieced together by the writer, and left in one of the rooms when the work was discontinued, and may still, I believe, be seen there.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkie House and Falkland Palace are the only other two buildings having examples of this work whereon gold-leaf is used.

ship shortly afterwards, the restoration of this most interesting piece of decorative painting was never carried into effect.

Some of the decorative painting in Culross Palace, Clackmannanshire, has also met a somewhat similar fate—not quite split up and used as lathing, but it has been taken down from the original positions and stored away in a side apartment of the building. These removed portions of painted-timber lining may still be seen. The reason given for this act of destruction was: "It prevented any notes or sketches being taken of the work."<sup>1</sup> Owing to the great difficulty in trying to obtain sketches here of any of the work, a passing glance indicated that a barrel-vaulted apartment had its ceiling lined with wood having its entire surface divided into sixteen rectangular compartments by painted bands, all very sorely faded, each containing quaintly drawn figure-subjects, with quotations lettered underneath.<sup>2</sup>

A great many of these ceilings are very much faded. Although much of the colouring is obliterated, the outlines were more easily traced, enabling careful water-colour drawings to be made; but to make the nature of the work more clearly understood, the water-colour drawings—correct in every detail—taken from the best known surviving examples, are slightly richer than the paintings as they now appear.

#### ABERDOUR CASTLE, FIFESHIRE, 1636.

The room containing this painted ceiling is on the first floor in the S.E. wing of the building. At present it is used as a kitchen with bed-recess and small pantry. Originally, however, it has been one single apartment; the partitions are of a more recent date, and have only been erected for a less important use.

The plan of the original apartment is almost square, measuring 15 feet

<sup>1</sup> This remark was made to the writer by the lady occupant, from whom permission was being asked to allow drawings and notes to be taken. Every solicitation proved of no avail, even although on one visit Lord Bute gave me authority to use his name.

<sup>2</sup> Nine of the painted compartments of the wooden ceiling at Culross Palace are given from coloured drawings by Thomas Bonnar and G. Waterston, jun., in the Architectural Association's *Sketch Book*, vol. iii. (1880-82), pl. 50.

6 inches by 15 feet, while the portion now exposed, revealing the painted roof, is 15 feet 6 inches by 10 feet 7 inches, the other parts still remaining covered with plaster.

The roof is of timber, and is divided into eight long compartments by cross-joists (fig. 1), each of which has its sides and face subdivided by yellow painted bands into several oblong blue panels bearing in their centres a small light-coloured ornament with a red heart—the charge of the Douglas family—introduced at either end of the design, enclosed by square and bevelled ends alternately. The surface of each large compartment is completely covered with very quaint and broadly painted decoration, embracing all manner of curious ornamentation—fruit, foliage, mouldings, and grotesques—painted in red, green, yellow, blue, and white on a black background.<sup>1</sup>

In another apartment, now used as a hay-loft, a painted door,<sup>2</sup> divided into panelling, clearly indicates that decorative painting must have been carried out very extensively in other parts of the building.

Everything points to this, and other carved decoration in stone, having been executed for, and during the lifetime of, William Douglas, eighth Earl of Morton, who died in 1648.

#### COLLAIRNIE CASTLE, FIFESHIRE, 1607.

This building is now in a very dilapidated condition. The first drawing (fig. 2) shows the painted roof in the room on the second flat. It has a plan of 14 feet 2 inches by 13 feet 10 inches.

It is divided into seven long compartments by cross-joists, each with its sides and face subdivided into three long panels by yellow painted bands and red lines, with a light-coloured scroll ornament filling the entire centre surfaces, painted on red or black grounds. Two small circles are formed, by the interlacing of these yellow and red bands, on

<sup>1</sup> The only remaining example of this work having its entire background painted black.

<sup>2</sup> All that now remains.



Fig. 1. Tempera-painted Ceiling at Aberdour Castle, Fifeshire, 1636. (Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

each beam, containing the initials H.B. and D.B.<sup>1</sup> lettered in white on a blue ground.

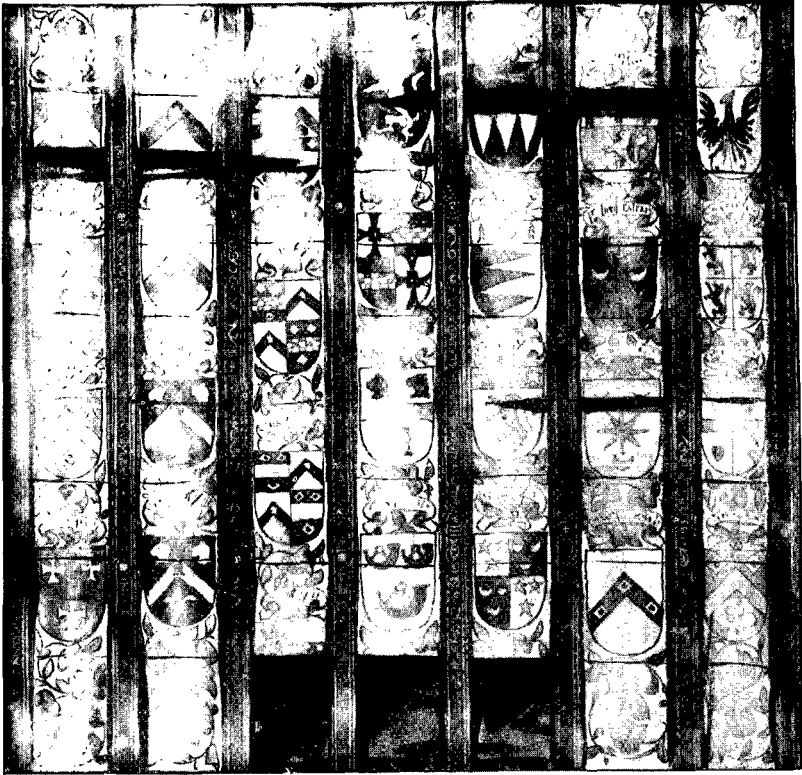


Fig. 2. Tempera-painted Ceiling in second flat of Collairnie Castle, Fife, 1607.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

The panels on the sides of these joists bear different quotations, sorely defaced and scarcely readable, in black German text, showing exquisite and exceptionally free pencil-work, lettered on a white ground.

<sup>1</sup> Initials of Hugh Barclay and David Bethune of Balfour, in the county of Fife.

The surface of each principal compartment is embellished with four large plain escutcheons charged with armorial bearings of different

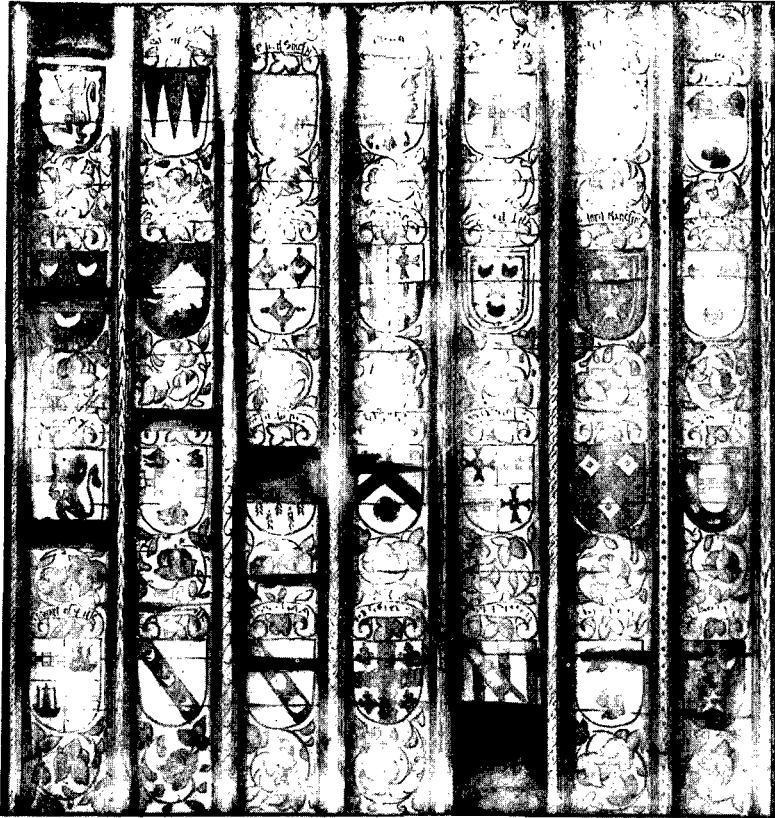


Fig. 3. Tempera-painted Ceiling in third flat of Collairnie Castle, Fife, 1607.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

families, whose name or title is lettered above each shield in black, on a white ribbon, shaded with blue.

The intervening spaces between each coat-of-arms are filled in with a

bold and freely painted floriated design in semi-natural tints outlined with black on a white ground.

The drawing reproduced in fig. 3 shows another painted roof in the room on the third flat, immediately above the last, in the same building. It has a plan of 14 feet 9 inches by 14 feet, and is similarly divided and enriched to the one already referred to, except that the shields bear different charges, and the beams are decorated with different designs.

#### FALKLAND PALACE, FIFESHIRE, 1633.

The Chapel Royal in Falkland Palace is 65 feet long by 25 feet broad. It has a long and deeply moulded roof, lined with oak<sup>1</sup> and divided into several differently shaped compartments (fig. 4), each of which is embellished with cartouche framework, imperial crowns, the English and Scottish crests, and other national badges, with the ensigned initials of Charles I., and those of his consort, Maria (Henrietta Maria), daughter of Henry IV. of France.

The crowned armorial bearings of King Charles are fully emblazoned on a wooden escutcheon planted and fixed on the centre of the ceiling over the intersecting mouldings. There are also painted on the roof St Andrew's Cross, St George's Cross, an ensigned portcullis, and the badge of Charles, Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II. The work is similar in many points to that seen in Holyrood Palace.

A frieze, 6 feet 6 inches deep, is formed on two sides of this long apartment by timber lining having its entire surface decorated with upright panels containing thistle designs painted in yellow on a blue ground, enriched by royal crowns and monograms in gold.

Between these upright panels, in each division, there is a smaller oblong cartouche containing scriptural texts<sup>2</sup> lettered in gold on a black ground. These are connected to the larger panels by clusters of fruit suspended from ornamental brackets. In addition to these, on one side

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of four central panels which are entirely covered with red and gold and green and gold decoration, the real oak, exposed as background, is unpainted.

<sup>2</sup> Mostly taken from Psalms.



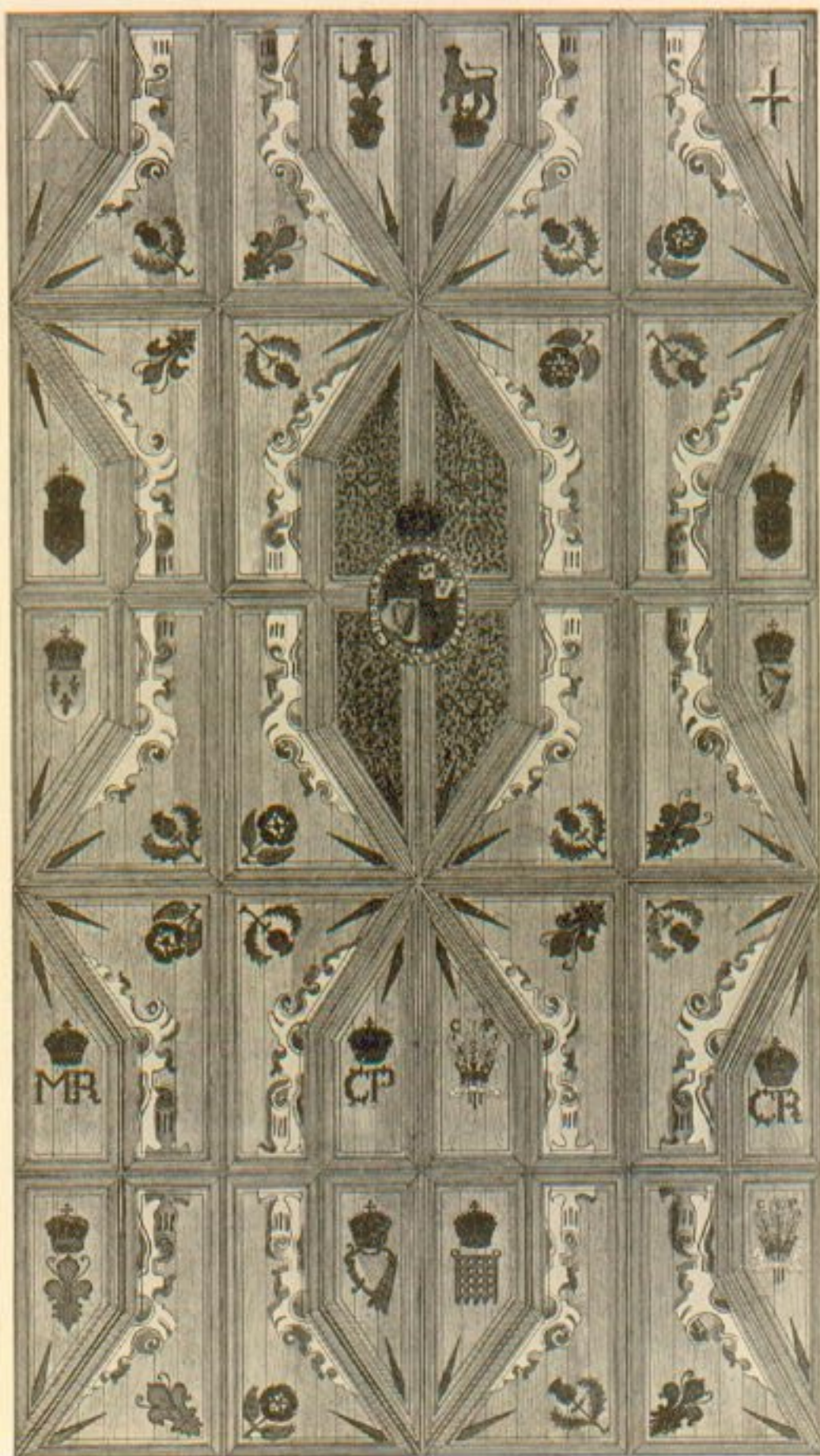


Fig. 4. Tempera-painted Ceiling in Falkland Palace, Fifeshire, 1633.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

of the chamber only and underneath the cartouche panels, the upper portion of a double-latticed window is painted, showing an Elizabethan strap-work soffit drawn in perspective, with lunettes and scotions. A small cartouche panel in the centre of the frieze bears the date A.D. 1633. The most of the painting is sorely obliterated, especially that on the frieze, but careful drawings were made afterwards, showing the ceiling and that portion of the frieze traced out and restored for Lord Bute in 1896.

#### EARLSHALL, FIFESHIRE, 1620.

The ceiling in the gallery is elliptically shaped, and lined with timber having its entire surface covered with decorative painting in black and white. It has an extended plan of 51 feet long by 24 feet wide, and is divided by dark-grey painted bands into many compartments, giving 218 square and circular panels, with the spaces between enriched by scroll and flower ornamentation, as shown in fig. 5. With the exception of thirty of these which are unpainted, each panel contains either armorial bearings, or some quaint representation of different animals.<sup>1</sup>

One circle-panel bears a representation of two human hearts interlacing each other, containing, within, the initials W.B. (William Bruce) and D.A.L. (Dame Agnes Lindsay), flanked by the date 1620.

Underneath the painted ceiling on the side walls a frieze is formed by a series of arcading resting on very quaint three-sided pillars in black on a white ground, with some of the inner spaces between these pillars bearing old Scottish quotations, such as:—

“Try and then trust  
Efter gude assurance  
Bot trust not or ye try  
For fear of repentance”;

and

“Give liberalye to neidful folke  
Denye nane of them all  
For litle thou knouest heir in this lyf  
Quhat chance may the befall.”

The decoration was restored for R. W. R. M'Kenzie, Esq., in 1892.

<sup>1</sup> A drawing of part of this ceiling by Thomas Bonnar is given in the Architectural Association's *Sketch Book*, vol. ii. (1887-94), pl. 21.

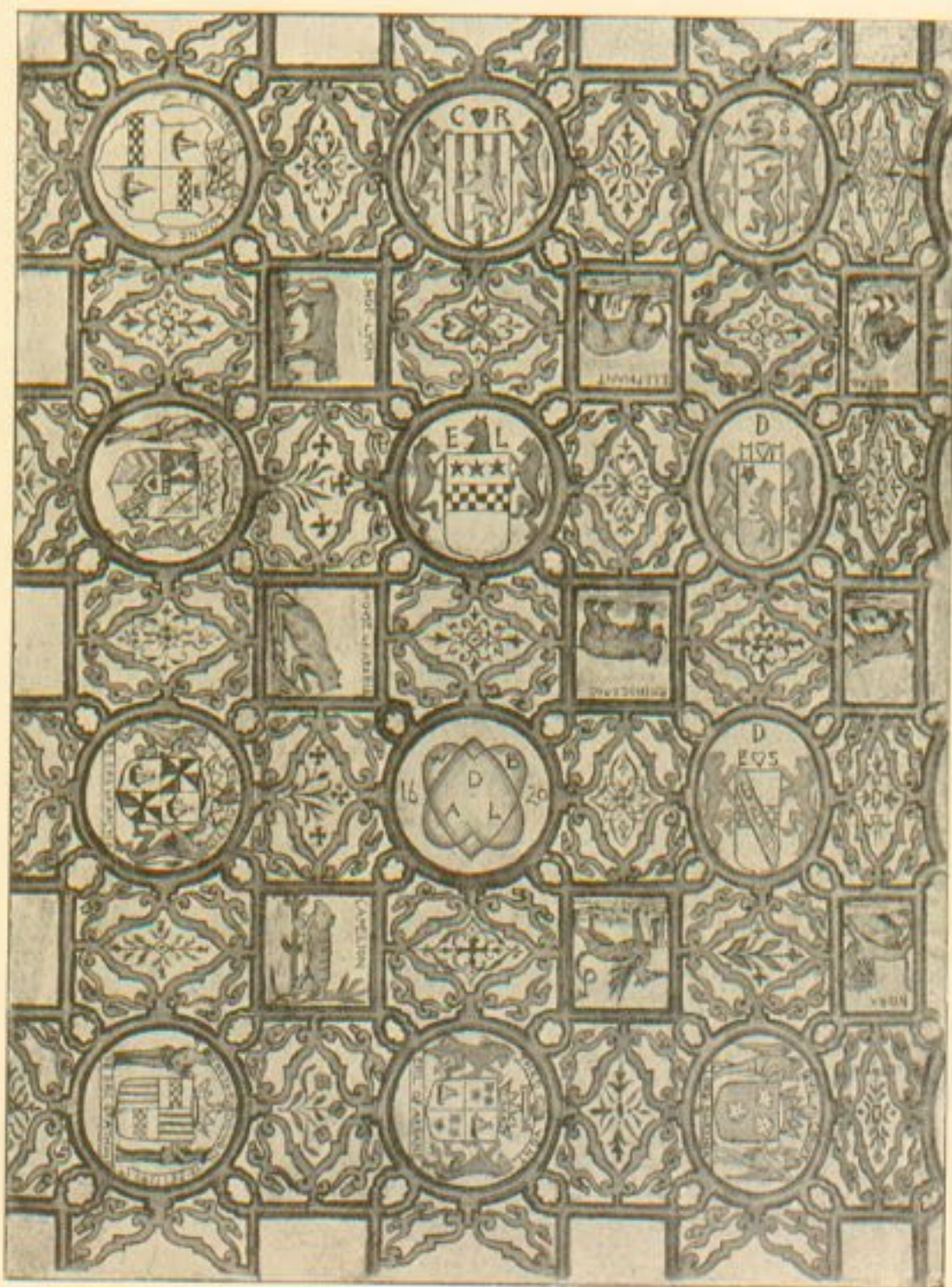


Fig. 5. Tempera-painted Ceiling at Earlshall, Fifeshire, 1620. (Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

## STOBHALL CASTLE, PERTHSHIRE, 1633.

The roof in the chapel is 22 feet long by 16 feet 9 inches broad. It is divided into five long compartments by cross-beams, each of which has one plain panel, enclosed by yellow painted bands, on its face, while the inner panels on the sides of the beams contain different kinds of scroll ornamentation.

A portion in the end division of the roof has been removed to allow the original Gothic gable window to be seen in its entirety. This part of the ceiling has been placed on the end wall, forming a frieze over the

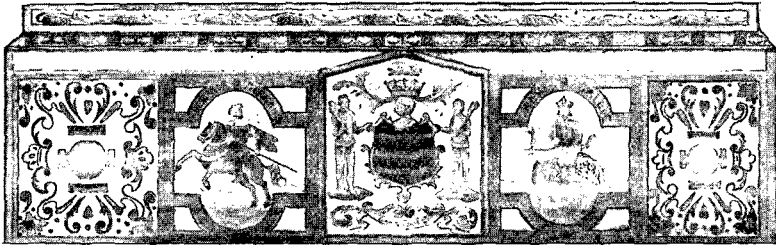


Fig. 6. Part of the Tempera-painted Ceiling at Stobhall Castle, Perthshire, 1633.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

doorway (fig. 6), with the large ornamental panels at either end, and the armorial bearings, with supporters, of the Drummond family (the Earldom of Perth), surmounted by an earl's coronet, in the centre. The surface of each compartment is subdivided into several panels, of different shapes and sizes, by yellow bands outlined with black on a white ground. Three rectangular panels on each of these divisions contain a very quaint coloured ornamentation similar to that on the frieze, but smaller (fig. 7). The arch-top panels at either end have paintings of various kinds of animals. The two larger central compartments in each division contain representations of different kings, fully dressed in their royal robes, sitting on horseback; one is seated on an elephant. A brightly painted checkered border encloses the entire roof.

The painted ceiling is of a much later date than that of the original chapel building, so that when the roof was put up the Gothic window appears to have been built up and plastered over, the present ceiling



Fig. 7. Part of the Tempera-painted Ceiling at Stobhall Castle, Perthshire, 1633.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

cutting straight across its centre. This plastering was again removed some years later, and a portion of the roof cut away as already referred to.

The decoration was restored in 1858 by James Robertson, Perth, as certified by an inscription on the side of one of the beams.

## THE CHURCH OF ST MARY, GRANDTULLY, PERTSHIRE, 1636.

This little church, not now used, except as a tool-house, has no exterior architectural pretensions. A portion of the raftered ceiling in the interior is barrel-vaulted and lined with wood having its entire surface enriched with decorative painting (fig. 8). It has an extended plan of 25 feet 10 inches long by 23 feet broad, with the boards in three different lengths and of various widths, enframed at one end by a narrow light-coloured "wavy" border painted on a black ground.

The spandril space at the end, above this border, facing inwards, bears the arms of the Stewart family, surmounted by the letter "S" encircled by a three-leaved garland, flanked by scrolls.

There are twenty-nine compartments — chiefly circular — on the ceiling, each of which contains either scriptural subjects, armorial bearings, or monograms. These divisions are all connected by bands, lines, cartouche-work, and other ornamentation, the intervening broken surfaces being enriched with clusters of fruit, vases holding flowers, quaintly drawn figures and birds, painted in red, yellow, green, black, and white on a light-tinted ground.

The six lower compartments on either side contain scriptural subjects, each with different suitable texts lettered around them in white Roman letters on a red ground. Four oval compartments, two on either side, in the second row bear paintings of the four Evangelists, St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John. Four similarly shaped panels, two on either side, in the same row contain the armorial bearings of (1) *Dam Agneis Moncrief*, (2) *Earle of Atholl*, (3) *Duke of Lennox*, and (4) *the Laird of Graintuellie*.

Four large circles, two on either side, are embellished with escutcheons, having supporters, charged with the armorial bearings of (1) *Great Britain*, surmounted by the English crest; (2) *Great Britain*, surmounted by the Scottish crest; flanked by the four badges, viz.: (1) *rose*, (2) *crowned thistle*, (3) *fleur-de-lis*, and (4) *the portcullis of Westminster*. The third and fourth panels are sorely defaced, but sufficient

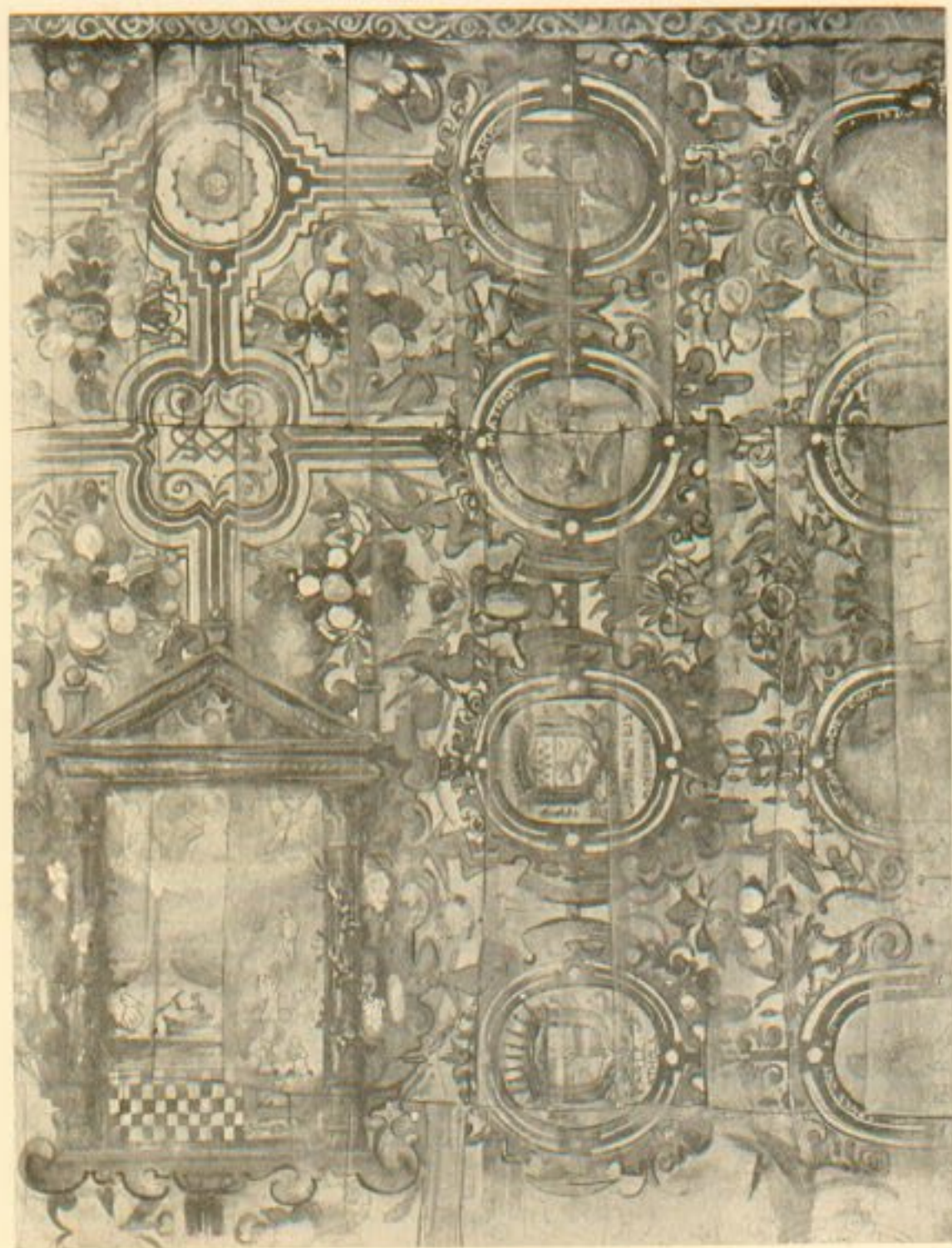


Fig. 8. Tempera-painted Ceiling in the Church of St Mary, Grandtully, Perthshire, 1636. (Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

still remains in outline to indicate that the shields bear some French ducal charge, one having dolphins as supporters, while the other appears to have some different animals of a similar kind supporting it.

In the top and middle row, at the extreme ends of the ceiling, two small circles contain (1) a representation of the moon and starry firmament enclosed by a double engrailed border, and (2) the sun in all its meridian splendour.

The two inner quatrefoil-shaped compartments bear the interlaced monograms of Sir William Stewart and those of his wife, Dame Agnes Monerieff.

The large architectural panel in the centre of the ceiling, though quaintly executed, is a beautiful finish to a fine piece of decorative design. The framework of the panel is very richly decorated with cartouche ornamentation, having an ornate pediment supported by two columns, around which there twine clusters of the vine, while the inner surface of the panel itself bears a painting of the Day of Judgment, the graves giving up their dead, the redeemed ascending, and the condemned falling into eternal night.

#### BALBEGNO CASTLE, KINCARDINESHIRE.

This lofty apartment has a groined roof, stone-built, with a ground plan of 29 feet 6 inches long by 19 feet 6 inches broad, and a rise of between 9 and 10 feet (fig. 9).

It is divided into sixteen triangular compartments by deeply-moulded stone ribs resting on and springing from six stone-carved corbels, and having carved bosses planted over the three central points of intersection. The small boss in the centre is a circular rosette; the larger one overhead bears an escutcheon charged with the arms of Scotland ensigned with a royal crown; the similar one underneath also bears a shield, having what appears to be a savage carved on its field.

Each member of the stone ribs is enriched with Gothic trefoil, balls and pearl, and guilloche decorative border-work in red, green, and white, outlined with black.



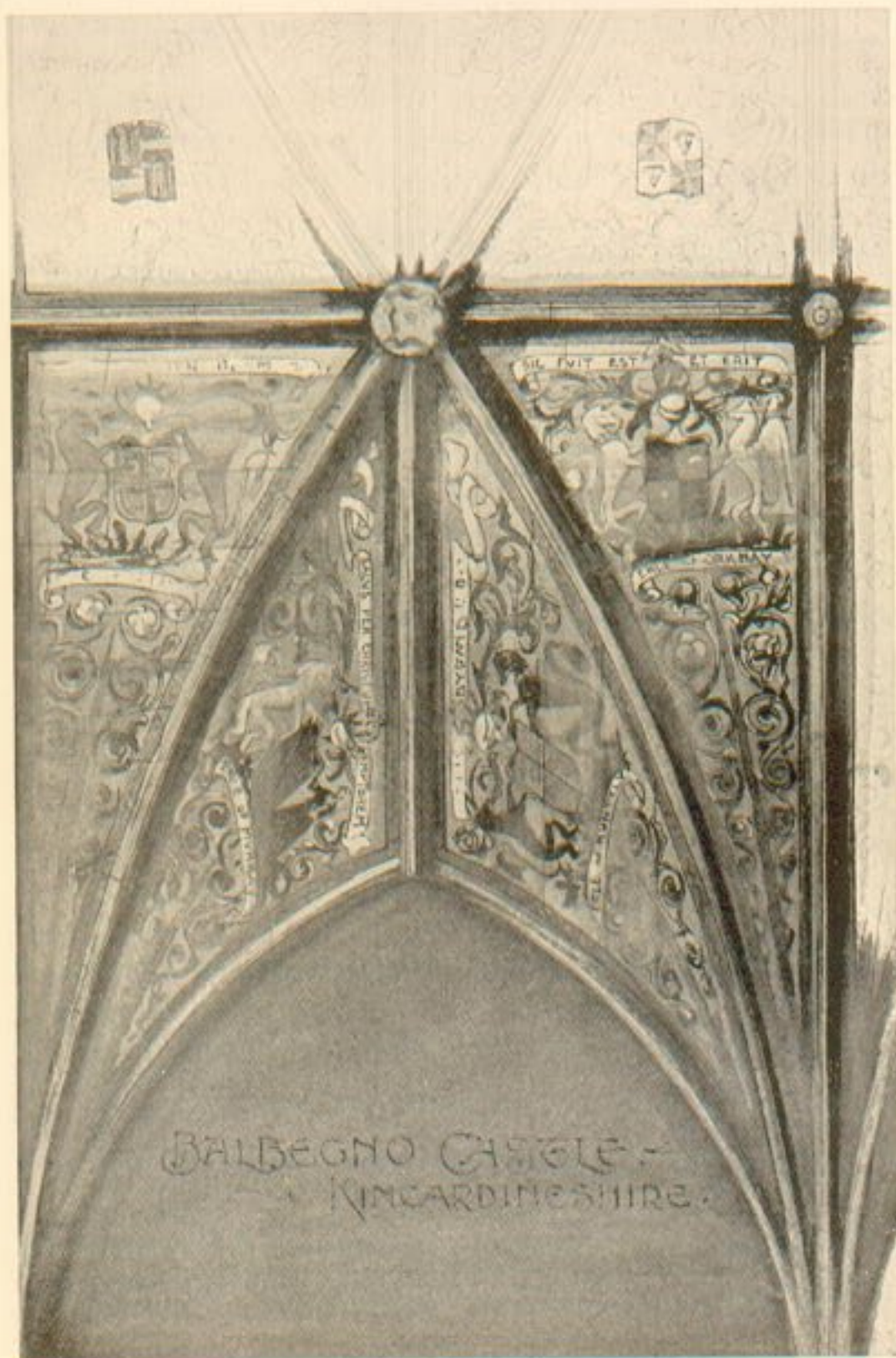


Fig. 9. Tempera-painted Ceiling of Groined Roof in the Dining Hall, Balbegno Castle, Kincardineshire. (Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

The surface of each compartment is elaborately painted with scroll ornamentation, pierced by a "sun-ray" centre from the bottom angle of the yellow band, which encloses the complete panel, bearing on its face a narrow red-coloured guilloche border separated from the ground surface of the compartment by a black line. The top portion of each compartment is greatly enriched by the fully charged armorial bearings of some Scottish earl, with crest and motto, over the shield, and their respective titles lettered underneath in black, on white ribbons.

#### CESSNOCK CASTLE, AYRSHIRE.

The present dining-room has originally been somewhat larger, but, although many alterations have been made, the largest portion of the tempera-painted roof still remains almost intact.

It has a plan, as it now stands, of about 26 feet long by 21 feet wide. It is lined with wood and is divided into eight compartments by roughly hewn beams, each of which is entirely covered on all three sides with different kinds of painted panelling and imbricated ornamentation. The surface of each division is profusely decorated in different free or geometrical designs painted on light and dark grounds, enclosed by a bold guilloche border in reds and greens, with the outlines in black.

#### NUNRAW HOUSE, HADDINGTONSHIRE.

The apartment now used as a billiard-room contains a very interesting painted ceiling (fig. 10). It has a ground plan of 20 feet 3 inches long by 17 feet 6 inches wide.

It is divided into ten long compartments by cross-joists; each of these is subdivided into several oblong panels bearing decorated centres in black or white on yellow and red grounds alternately, enclosed by coloured bands and lines, counterchanged, interlacing each other in different ways at five or six points on each beam, similar to those at Collairnie Castle.

The surfaces of the principal compartments are very elaborately decorated with almost every conceivable kind of ornamentation, embracing



Fig. 10. Tempera-painted Ceiling at Nuuraw House, Haddingtonshire.  
(Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

animals, musical instruments, trophies, and heraldry, flanked on either side by a guilloche border, similar to that at Balbegno, in red on a yellow ground.

Near the top and bottom of each division there is a shield, each charged with the arms of different kingdoms—twenty in all—supported underneath by two cupids and surmounted by an imperial crown, all of the same design, over which the respective titles are lettered in black on a white ribbon.

In the third division from the right and near the top a tilted cartouche shield bears a monogram<sup>1</sup> (P.R.C.H.), and in the fourth panel, almost directly opposite, a blue ribbon bears "GRATVS EST" lettered in black.

In the middle of the fourth panel, from the left, the lion and the unicorn may be seen supporting the crowned thistle, while the second division contains the Scottish crest.

#### PINKIE HOUSE, MUSSELBURGH, 1613.

The ceiling in the gallery is vaulted, similar to that in Earls hall, lined with wood having its entire surface profusely enriched with decorative painting. It has an extended plan of nearly 80 feet long by 21 feet broad (fig. 11).

The middle portion of the ceiling is entirely occupied by a large square division 16 feet by 16 feet 3 inches, containing a perspective view of an octagonal-shaped cupola, ascending in three tiers of balconies, the first row being enlivened with cupids playing various musical instruments, terminating at its apex with a pierced dome bearing in its centre the armorial bearings of Alexander Seton, Earl of Dunfermline, for whom apparently the painting has been executed about 1613.

The arms of Lord Yester, Earl Bothwell, Farquhard of Gilmulscroft, the Earl of Angus, the Earl of Cassillis, Lord Borthwick, and the Earl of Winton are also painted in different parts of the imitation marbled cupola.

<sup>1</sup> The monogram may be read R. C. H. or P. C. H.

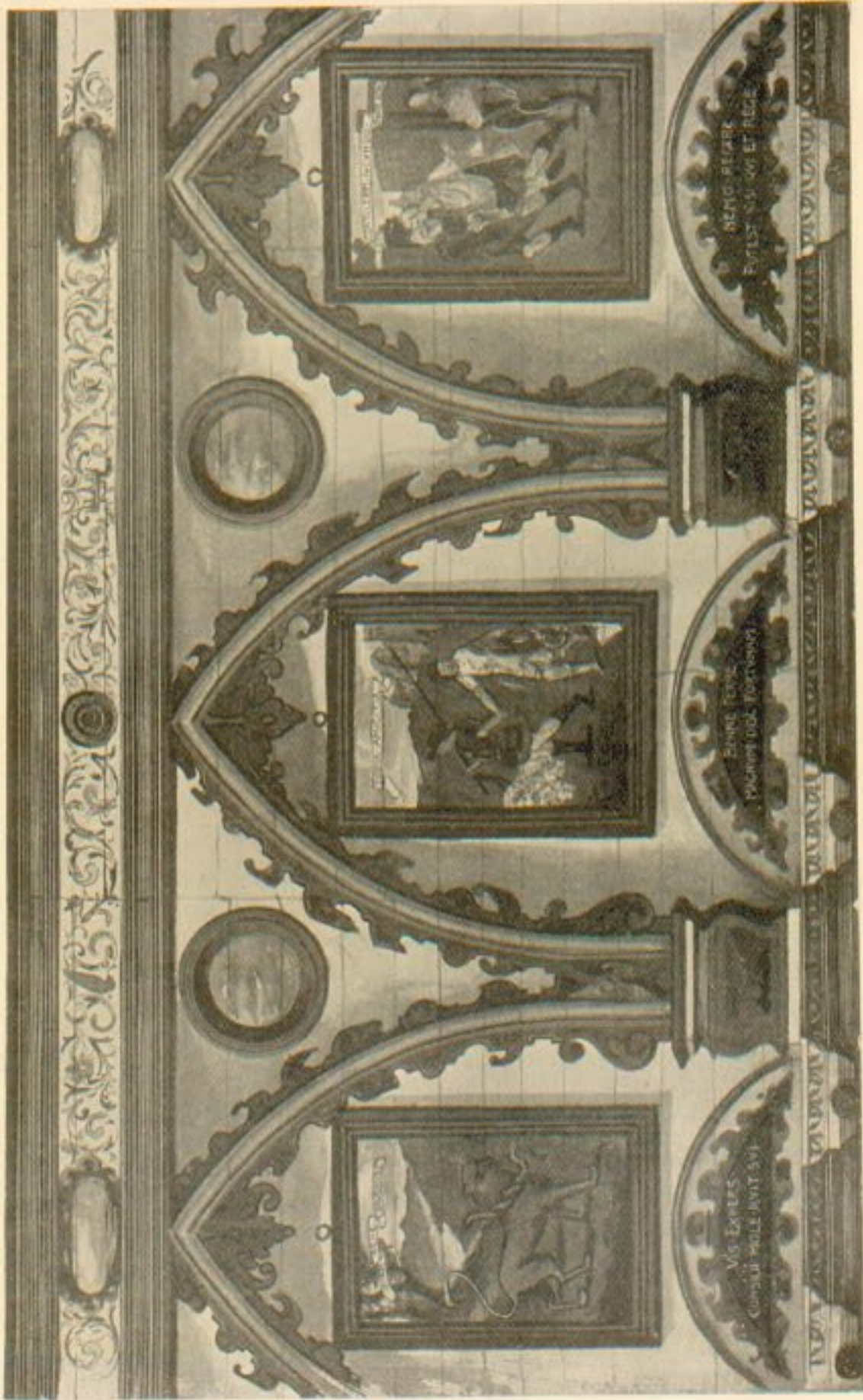


Fig. 11. Portion of Tempera-painted Ceiling at Pinkie House, Musselburgh, 1613. (Drawn by A. W. Lyons.)

Underneath the cupola there are four oblong cartouche panels containing different quotations lettered in gold on a black ground, and also four oval-shaped panels bearing pictorial or figure subjects.

This large compartment is enclosed by a very rich scroll and imitation moulding border which strikes off at its side-centres and runs straight across the middle of the ceiling, terminating at either end of the roof in a small circular division within which a perspective view of an octagonal Elizabethan cupola is painted.

On both halves of the ceiling, and also on either side of the middle ornamental border, there are three large Gothic arches enriched by cartouche-work, with a small white guilloche border painted in the centre on a blue ground bounded by gold lines. The spandril divisions formed thereby are pierced with a kind of port-hole decoration framed by a bold and strongly-coloured imitation circular moulding, or cartouche, in red and yellow. Twelve of these Gothic arches contain pictorial figure subjects, each enclosed by a black and gold plain frame,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, suspended by a painted ring from imitation nails. Four other similar but smaller arches, underneath the two end cupolas, contain an inner circle-top cartouche panel bearing quotations lettered in gold on a black ground. Underneath the twelve pictorial subjects within each Gothic arch, a lunette division is formed by a yellow band containing a segmental cartouche panel bearing gold-lettered quotations, in Latin, on a black ground. Both of these differently shaped arches spring from boldly drawn and painted ornamental corbels.

The whole scheme of decoration is completed by showing the entire design resting over an imitation painted cornice, extending the full length of the gallery on both sides, with an egg enrichment broken at intervals by projections bearing on their face a shell-rosette ornamentation.

The soffit of the oriel-window is also enriched with a large cartouche panel containing a painting of a sleeping stork holding a ball in its claws, with Greek quotations lettered above and underneath in gold, on ribbons enclosed by a quaint chain-border painted in yellow on a blue ground, bearing monograms of the Seton family, surmounted by an earl's coronet.

*Structures of Archaic Type in the Island of Lewis*

STRUCTURES OF ARCHAIC TYPE IN THE ISLAND OF LEWIS. 173

These complete a series of very carefully made water-colour drawings of the best remaining examples of that quaint style of tempera decorative painting so much in vogue throughout Scotland during the early part of the seventeenth century.

# PAINTED CEILING IN OLD GALA HOUSE

Date and Initials Found <sup>35195</sup>

Important new discoveries have been made in the painted ceiling at Old Gala House, Galashiels, for the preservation of which the Historical Monuments Committee have given a grant of £300.

The ceiling boards have now been exposed, and on two portions is the date 1635, presumably the date when the ceiling was painted. The ceiling also bears a number of paintings and the initials "I. P." and "H. S.," which are important in the history of Galashiels. The initials "I. P." are those of Jean Pringle (the letter "I" being the old form of "J") and "H. S." those of Hugh Scott, the first of the Scotts of Gala, whose descendant, Mr. Christopher Scott, is the present Laird of Gala.

The last of the Pringles to live at Old Gala House was Sir James Pringle, who was prominent in the Court of King James VI, and it was he who built the part of the house now facing the lawns. In 1632 he went to live at Smailholm Tower, where he died in 1635. He left Old Gala House as an estate to his daughter, Jean Pringle, who married Hugh Scott, of Deuchar, a son of the famous Border raider "Old Wat of Harden."

It is now clear that Jean Pringle, on taking possession of the house, undertook redecoration, part of which was this painted ceiling.

Few of the painted ceilings recently discovered throughout Scotland have any date attached to them, and the fact that the date of this ceiling at Old Gala House has now been established will help the Ministry of Works experts to classify other ceilings.

The Old Gala House ceiling is regarded by experts as one of the best discovered and is probably the work of Flemish artists or of someone who studied the Flemish school of art. It is painted in tempera and in a light colour, facts which probably contribute to its legibility and good state of preservation.