

II.

NOTE ON THREE TAPESTRY¹ HANGINGS INVENTORIED AMONG THE BELONGINGS OF MARY OF GUISE, QUEEN REGENT, AND OF HER DAUGHTER, MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. BY R. SCOTTMONCRIEFF, SECRETARY.

According to family tradition, the three tapestry hangings which form the subject of this paper came into the possession of William Hogg,² merchant in Edinburgh, in 1692, and to him is imputed the responsibility of having mounted them in the somewhat barbarous fashion in which they now appear. These hangings in their present form have been publicly exhibited on several occasions. An account of them also appeared in January 1872 in an article contributed by the late Mr George Seton, advocate, to *The Leisure Hour*, that "Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation," as its title further bears. But they seem to be entitled to a place in a more important and permanent publication—such as the volume of our *Proceedings*—not only on account of their historical interest, but for their high artistic merit.

The history of this fine example of sixteenth-century needlework divides itself into three periods. The first extends from September 1561, when the pieces are inventoried as having belonged to the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, to 1578, when they are inventoried as having been taken over from the Regent Morton by James VI. The second period extends from the reign of James VI. to 1692, at which date they are believed to have been acquired by Mrs Rachel Sinclair or Hog on behalf of her ward the before-mentioned William Hogg. The third and last period covers the time from 1692 to the present day. Of the first and last periods we have more or less definite information, but of the middle period we know nothing and can only conjecture. I propose to deal first with the last and, I fear, the least interesting period.

¹ These hangings have been termed "tapestry," but strictly speaking they are *petit-point* needlework; that is, they are hand-sewn on canvas and not woven. Two of them are 6 feet 6 inches in length by 1 foot 8½ inches in depth; the third, as it now exists, although of the same depth, is only 5 feet 8 inches in length. They are mounted on a screen, as shown in the illustration.

² "Hogg" seems to have been spelt at this time indiscriminately with one or two *g*'s. Andrew Hog, William's father, appears to have used one *g*; his son used two.

Family tradition has it that these hangings were acquired in 1692, as already stated, and furthermore that they were acquired in exchange for a kitchen grate and 28s. Scots. And it can be shown, I think, that there is a certain amount of foundation for this tradition.

William Hogg's father, Andrew Hogg, Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, died in the beginning of October 1691. He had been predeceased in May of the same year by his wife Jane Sinclair, and was survived by two infant sons, one of whom died in the succeeding February, leaving the other, William, the only child who grew to maturity. Andrew Hogg left a testamentary settlement by which he appointed tutors to his children, and among these tutors was his wife's sister, Mrs Rachel Sinclair or Hog, the widow of his cousin William Hog, who also had been a Writer to the Signet. This Mrs Hog seems to have been a capable woman, for, besides taking charge of her sister's child, she acted as factor on his estate during the first year of the trust, and on several subsequent occasions.

According to our modern ideas there was an almost indecent haste in realising the deceased's property. He was buried in Greyfriars Churchyard on 6th October, and by the 24th of the month his whole household plenishings, with a few exceptions, had been roused. I imagine little advertising would be done beyond employing the services of the city bellman. What I may term "the Trust Sederunt Book" is in my possession, and it gives full details of the furnishings sold, of the purchasers' names, and of the prices obtained. It also gives details of the articles remaining unsold, twenty in number, among which is the following: "Item the kitchen chimney and standing raxes thereof one of them broken." The next year's account, which is duly engrossed in the Sederunt Book, shows which of these twenty articles had meanwhile been sold, and from it we learn that the kitchen chimney and raxes were among the articles disposed of, and that they had fetched the sum of £7 Scots. The names of the purchasers are not given, but fortunately Mrs Hog kept a notebook, which is still extant, and in this she was in the habit of jotting down memoranda dealing with money spent both for her own children and on behalf of her ward. From this we learn the fate of the "kitchen chimney," for in the corner of one of the covers of the book there is the following jotting: "Sold a chimney to Mrs Whiteford May 16th 1692 at 2/ St^e ye Stone for qch I have received three piece of hanging at 5 lib. Scots price and have given her 28 sh. Scots of money."

It has always been understood in the family that the three pieces of tapestry here illustrated (fig. 1) are the three hangings which were so acquired. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that these three pieces of tapestry were at some time or other acquired by William Hogg, and that



Fig. 1. "Ane tapestrie of the historie of Roboam," mounted on a screen.

they eventually passed by succession, along with his pictures, papers, and many other of his belongings, to his Scott Moncrieff descendants, as follows:—

William Hogg died intestate in April 1767, survived by one son, Thomas, by his first wife, and by four daughters by his second wife. The eldest of these daughters, Jean, married my great-great-grandfather, Robert Scott Moncrieff. The son, Thomas, married in 1757, and died intestate in 1784. He left no sons, so that the male line of Hogg died out; but he was survived by two daughters, the younger of whom married her first cousin (half-blood), William Scott Moncrieff, eldest son of the aforesaid Robert Scott Moncrieff and of her father's half-sister Jean Hogg. This double connection makes it a little difficult to say definitely when any particular article passed from the Hoggs to the Scott Moncrieffs, and this difficulty is further increased by the fact that Robert Scott Moncrieff purchased all his brother-in-law's furniture from his creditors when the latter got into financial difficulties in 1769. This furniture was allowed to remain in Thomas Hogg's possession, and was not handed over to the Scott Moncrieffs until the death of his widow in 1812. Whether the screen passed to Robert Scott Moncrieff on the death of his father-in-law William Hogg in 1767, or later to his son in 1812, I cannot be certain,¹ but it was undoubtedly in the house of the latter, William Scott Moncrieff, my great-grandfather, when my father lived with him as a boy. My father tells me that it was then known, and that he believes it had always been known, in the family as "Queen Mary's screen," from some tradition that it had belonged to her.

William Scott Moncrieff died in 1846, when the screen passed to his eldest son Robert, and it was when in his possession that light was thrown upon the earlier history of the hangings. His eldest daughter, while studying the screen one day, suddenly recognised the Biblical story depicted on it—a flash of inspiration, one might almost call it, considering the misleading sixteenth-century costume in which the characters are disguised—and subsequent reference to the volume of old inventories published by the Bannatyne Club at once showed that the family tradition connecting the screen with Queen Mary had some solid foundation in fact. To these inventories I shall now refer, but, in passing, perhaps I may be allowed to add that my grandfather bequeathed the screen to his eldest daughter as a reward for her intelligence, that she gave it to my father, who in his turn gave it to me.

The story so rendered is unmistakable once the incidents represented

¹ From the fact that it is not mentioned in the inventory of the furniture of Thomas Hogg when he became bankrupt, I am inclined to think that it must have formed part of Jean Hogg's succession to her father, and so came into the family in 1767.

have been pointed out. It is the history of Rehoboam and of his rival Jeroboam as set forth in the Book of Kings, and the first mention of the hangings occurs in the "Inventaire of the Queene Regentis movables quhilkis wer deliverit to me Servay de Conde vallet of chamber to the Q in presence of Madamemoiselle de Raulle. The hail was ressavit in the moneth of September the yeir of God J^m V^c LXI." Mary of Guise, Queen Mary's mother; who was Queen Regent of Scotland, died in Edinburgh Castle on 11th June 1560, and the inventory in question was made when the *valet de chambre* of her daughter, who had returned to Scotland a young widow, took over the Queen Regent's effects from her representatives. As there is another inventory dated in November of the same year dealing with the Queen Regent's effects in Holyrood, I have little doubt that this inventory dealt with her effects in Edinburgh Castle. The entry of particular interest in connection with the screen occurs under the heading of "Tapestrie," and is as follows: "Item ane tapestrie of the historie of Roboam contening foure peces." The tapestry now consists of three pieces only, but when we come to consider the story it will be seen that the representation of an important episode in Rehoboam's career is wanting.

This inventory is a particularly interesting one, for it was gone over in 1569, after Regent Moray had assumed the reins of government, by the same Servay de Conde on behalf of Queen Mary, and by Mr John Wood¹ (the Regent's secretary), who took delivery of the effects on behalf of the Regent. The margin is annotated, presumably by Servay de Conde, with information as to the fate of each particular item. Thus we learn what material had been used up, which beds had been worn out, where this article or that was housed at the moment—Loch Leven or Stirling Castle,—which articles had been given away, and which had formed the furniture of Kirk o' Field and had been "tint" in the King's "ludgeing" on that tragic night in February 1567 when he was blown up. Against the item of the "Roboam" tapestry is marked "In Striveling."

These hangings were, however, back again in Edinburgh Castle in 1578, for they are referred to in "The Inventair of the Jowellis plenissings, artaillierie and munitioun being within the Castell of Edinburgh," etc., which is dated 24th March of that year.

This later inventory was made on the occasion when the nobles, sick of the tyranny of Regent Morton, declared the youthful James of age, although only twelve years old, and deposed the Earl; and it records

¹ See footnote 4, p. xviii of *Inventories of Mary Queen of Scots*, published by the Bannatyne Club. The above seems a more likely explanation of Mr John Wood's signature being appended to this inventory than that given therein. Had the older inventory been copied and used, the heading most certainly would have been altered.

what was then handed over by the Regent's Commissioners to the King's Commissioners. There again, under "Tapestrie," we find mention of the history of Rehoboam, but on this occasion the set is stated to consist of five pieces. The entry runs: "Five pece of the historie of King Roboam."

In spite of this difference, there can be little doubt that the two entries refer to the same set of hangings. Nor need the fact that this set of hangings was again in Edinburgh Castle call for any out-of-the-way explanation, as not only tapestry but beds and other furnishings were moved from place to place as the Court required them.

The increase in the number of pieces may be due to an additional piece having been added between 1561 and 1578, and a possibility that this additional piece may have been sewn under the direct supervision of Queen Mary herself adds greatly to the interest. On the other hand, the increase is much more likely to be due to the inclusion by mistake of a hanging from another set. In several cases the numbers of pieces of which particular sets consisted as stated in the two inventories do not agree. For instance, the history of Count de Foix of Ravenna is stated in the first inventory to contain "sevin peces," and in the second to contain only "fourre peces." As probably there was nothing in costume to distinguish the characters of this mediæval story from the characters of the Biblical story—both no doubt being clad in sixteenth-century dress—and assuming that the pieces of the two sets were something of the same size, what more easy than that a mistake should be made and a piece from one set included in the other set? This of course is but an instance; but when we remember that, besides the tapestries mentioned in detail in this inventory, reference is also made to "sundrie sorts small and greit to be speciallie designit heirefter Threscoir seventene peces," we can easily understand how ample was the opportunity for mistake. There is another reason why I think that four was probably the correct number, and that is, that while the representation of Rehoboam's story—as we shall afterwards see—obviously requires one piece to complete it, I doubt if an artist would find material enough for two more.

So much for the first and last periods of the history of the hangings. What can we say about the middle period? I have no doubt that these tapestries remained safely in the royal keeping as long as King James remained in Scotland; but what happened to them after he left in 1603 and until we find them in 1692 in the hands of a dealer?—for such I am convinced the Mrs Whiteford mentioned to have been.¹

¹ My reason for conjecturing that Mrs Whiteford was a dealer is as follows:—I see from the roup roll of William Hogg's furniture, which as already mentioned is engrossed in the Sederunt Book, that she was a large purchaser of such articles as a dealer would be most likely to buy. Furthermore, she helped officially at the sale, and along with Mrs Hog and Thomas George, writer in Edinburgh, clerk of the roup, she signs the docquet at the end of the roup

We know that Holyrood had been denuded of its plenishings by June 1603,¹ and doubtless the Castle had suffered in a similar manner. No doubt much of the furnishings went to England with the King, but much had also been removed in a more clandestine way, as is clearly indicated by an order of Charles I. in June 1626 to the Master of the Wardrobe in Scotland, to take measures for recovering all "hingings and tapestrie plate or other stufte and plenishing" belonging to the King.² Probably the "Roboam" hangings were amongst those sought for at this time; but even assuming that they were still in the royal keeping in the Castle, or in Holyrood, what chance had they of remaining *in situ* during the troublous times that followed?

The Castle was besieged and entered by Cromwell's troops in 1640; again besieged and taken in 1689, when it was so gallantly defended by the Duke of Gordon. Holyrood was occupied by Cromwell's infantry in 1650, and set fire to by mistake on 13th November of that year. It may be difficult to say by whom or under what circumstances these hangings were removed, but there is little difficulty in imagining half a dozen ways in which they might have been taken and might have found their way to a dealer's store.

Turning now to the tapestry itself, we find that the scenes depicted on it deal with the history of those rival monarchs Rehoboam and Jeroboam, as related in 1st Kings from about verse 26 of chapter xi. to verse 18 of chapter xiv. The story begins in the left-hand corner of the middle strip, where we see Jeroboam and the Prophet Ahijah, with the walls and towers of Jerusalem in the background. It will be remembered that towards the end of his reign Solomon, struck by the energy and capacity of Jeroboam, then a young man, had advanced him to be ruler over the house of Joseph, and how, as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem one day, he was met by Ahijah, who took the new garment that he (Jeroboam) was wearing, and, having torn it into twelve pieces, gave Jeroboam ten, symbolising that he should succeed Solomon as King over the ten tribes of Israel, while Rehoboam, Solomon's son, should succeed to the kingdom of Judah alone. The tapestry depicts the Prophet with two pieces of the garment in his hands and the ten pieces lying on the ground at his feet. Solomon heard of this meeting, and Jeroboam not unnaturally had to fly to Egypt.

The next scene is King Rehoboam with his Court—a young counsellor

roll. In this docquet she is described as the widow of "Jon Whytefoord," writer in Edinburgh. The first Account of Charge and Discharge shows that she was paid a fee of lb. 6, 12/ Scots for helping at the sale. This was the same fee as was paid to Thomas George.

¹ Inventar of the Movables of Holyruidhous, 1603.

² Secretary Sir Wm. Alexander's Register of Royal Letters, 1626-31, p. 27, MS. Register House.

on his right hand and an old one on his left. Further to the right (not of the King, but of the section) we have a gesticulating figure which may be intended for Jeroboam, who on the death of Solomon had returned, and who had been made the people's mouthpiece in bringing their grievances to the ears of the King. Rehoboam, it will be remembered, followed the advice of his young counsellors, and replied that instead of diminishing he would increase the burdens to be borne by the people. This episode is narrated in the first half of the twelfth chapter, and the episodes which follow in the second half of the chapter are those which must have formed the subjects of the missing hanging. These episodes are the chastisement of the people with scorpions instead of whips, the stoning of Adoram, who was sent to collect the tribute, and the election of Jeroboam as King of Israel.

The lowest strip on the screen must have originally formed the third of the set. The scenes depicted on it are laid at Bethel and are taken from chapter xiii. They show in the first place King Jeroboam worshipping at the altar which he had set up there to the two golden calves, and, standing by, the man of God, who came to warn him of his sin and of his fate. It will be recalled how this man of God refused to break his fast in Bethel, as the Almighty had forbidden him to do so, but that an old prophet who resided there sent and recalled him, and induced him by a falsehood to partake of food with him. In the right hand of the hanging the two prophets are seen at meat, waited on by a black page. The fate of the unfortunate man of God is depicted in the background of the top and last hanging. After his meal he set out on his return journey, but was promptly killed by a lion on account of his disobedience, "and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase." Towards the right-hand side of the top strip may be seen the ass and the lion and the carcase.

Chapter xiv. deals with the illness of Jeroboam's little son Abijah. The scene depicted in the left-hand corner of the top strip shows the child on his bed of state, with his mother bending over him and a maid of honour waiting on him. Then we see the King sending the Queen with presents to the Prophet Ahijah, now an old man, to try to ascertain from him the fate of the child. It will be remembered that she went disguised, but that the prophet recognised her and gave her the heavy tidings "when thy feet enter into the city the child shall die."

On the right of the hanging, at the door of Ahijah's house are seen the Queen and her attendant with the present of the loaves and cracknels and cruse of honey, and the Prophet speaking to them.

If we assume that the lost hanging contained representations of the events narrated in the second part of the twelfth chapter, there are practi-

cally no other episodes left in the lives of these two monarchs which it would have been possible to portray on canvas. I think we may therefore safely conclude that four, and not five, pieces formed the original number of the set.

In conclusion, allow me to say that although I have given for what it is worth the traditional history of these hangings since they came into the possession of my forebears, I quite see that the proof of that history is not altogether conclusive. It may have been another three hangings which were acquired in 1692 in exchange for the kitchen grate.

Fortunately, however, the genuineness of these relics does not depend on the truth of this statement, nor on the undoubted fact of the long period during which they have been in the family. Their pedigree is writ large on their face. No doubt can exist as to their being genuine sixteenth-century needlework, and that of the finest quality. They resemble so much in size, shape, design, and workmanship three hangings belonging to the present Earl of Morton, which his ancestor the Regent is said to have acquired from Queen Mary's belongings—a statement there is no reason to doubt—that one cannot help thinking that they must have been the work of the same hands. This in itself would have been an indication of their origin, but we have a surer proof in their subject-matter. Had the subject been a hackneyed one such as the Judgment of Solomon, or the Choice of Paris, a reasonable doubt could have existed as to their identity with the hangings inventoried; but it is so extremely unlikely that there should have been in Scotland at that time two sets of fine needlework dealing with an unusual subject like that of Rehoboam, and consisting of something like the same number of pieces, that one is irresistibly driven to the conclusion that these pieces are one and the same with those mentioned in the inventories, and that they have actually adorned the walls of the royal apartments in the Castles of Edinburgh and Stirling when these were occupied by that most beautiful and unfortunate of women, Mary Queen of Scots.