

## I.

### OLD PARLIAMENT HALL, EDINBURGH: STATUES OF JUSTICE AND MERCY. By THOMAS ROSS, LL.D., F.S.A.Scot.

These statues, with the accompanying carved stones, were found in August 1909 in the back garden of No. 37 Drummond Place; and after some negotiations with the proprietor they were purchased by the Faculty of Advocates. The two figures, with the stone containing the city arms, have been placed within the old Parliament Hall; while the pediment stone with the open-arched crown surmounted by a cross, and having the date 1636, has been placed over a doorway in the new piazza.

The aspect of the old Hall was entirely changed about 1824, when the present front was erected over the new projecting piazza. The old handsome doorway<sup>1</sup> was taken down, and, with all its adornments, was carted as rubbish to a villa at Trinity; on the death of the proprietor of this villa, the whole details were procured by Mr A. G. Ellis, W.S., a well-known collector of antiquities, and a member of this Society, who in 1829, and onwards for thirty years, was in possession of 37 Drummond Place. The late John Hutchison, sculptor, R.S.A., told me that in his youth he frequently visited Mr Ellis's house, and was greatly impressed with the objects of antiquarian interest he saw there.

The figures are about 5 feet 6 inches high, and are each cut out of a single block of freestone, probably obtained from some quarry to the

<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh*, 2nd edition, p. 99.



Statues of Justice and Mercy, with other carved stones, as they stood at Drummond Place.

west of Edinburgh. Justice holds in her left hand the handle from which the metal scales, now lost, were suspended; the right hand is broken off, but is preserved. The hair is bound with laurel leaves, and on her brow there is a star-shaped jewel; another square-shaped one on her breast, having a centre setting, is suspended from a double necklace. A belt tightly worn round the waist is secured by an ornamented clasp with a human face carved on the front, and a trefoil knot above. The attribute of Mercy is symbolised by the other statue holding her crown against her heart—the seat of pity and compassion. The crown, decorated with laurel leaves, was supported beneath by both hands; the right hand, unfortunately, like that of Justice, is broken off. She has a circlet of leaves round her forehead, with faded traces on her brow. Her long dishevelled hair flowing down her breast and back in disorderly folds indicates the passion with which Mercy pleads her cause.

The Rev. R. Scott Mylne, in his valuable work, *The Master Masons of Scotland*, states that these statues were sculptured by Alexander Mylne, who was born in Perth in 1613. His father, John Mylne, was a well-known architect and builder, who held the appointment of Master Mason to the Crown from Charles I. The father came to Edinburgh in 1616, on the invitation of the Town Council, to sculpture a statue of James VI. proposed to be erected on the Nether Bow Port, and to superintend other works. Within three months of his arrival there is a payment made to Mr Mylne for the stones from Inverleith for the "King's portrait." This portrait of James probably exists somewhere; and the circumstance reminds me that there is, within a few minutes' walk of Perth Railway Station, a medallion portrait built into a comparatively modern house, which has a suspicious look of being a portrait of James, and possibly made by John Mylne.

Alexander assisted his father and his elder brother John in the making of the sundial at Holyrood; and in 1635 he was paid £200 Scots for making the King's arms for the doorway of this hall. This stone is now lost. We may suppose that he executed the work of the Edinburgh arms on the stone found at Drummond Place, to which reference has already been made. In 1637, in his twenty-fourth year, he was paid £266, 13s. 4d. for carving the statues of Justice and Mercy. Alexander Mylne died suddenly in the thirtieth year of his age, in 1643, when one of the frequent plagues was raging in Edinburgh; he was buried in the north transept of Holyrood, where a monument was erected to his memory. This was subsequently removed and set up on the north-east outside corner of the nave, where it may still be seen. It contains a Latin inscription with a translation intimating that what ancient masters "could have done in Brass or Paintry hee could that in stone."

The Rev. Thomas Morer, minister of St Ann's-within-Aldersgate, when he was chaplain to a Scotch regiment in 1689, visited Scotland. He writes:<sup>1</sup> "The Pride of Edinburgh is the Parliament-Yard or Close as they call it, in the midst whereof is the effigies of King Charles II. on horseback; a well-proportioned figure of stone." (This is a mistake.) "The Yard is square and well paved, beautified with good buildings round about it; and the only fault is, that it is no bigger, the height of the houses bearing no correspondence to the dimensions of the area." This has reference to the high houses, known as the *babes*, occupying the east side of the square—the highest houses in Edinburgh. Morer continues: "Its western boundary is the Parliament House, a large room and high roofed. Over the entrance is the Scotch arms with Mercy and Truth on each side, like two supporters, and this inscription—*Stant his Felicia Regna*—These vertues make Kingdoms happy. Under the arms was, *Unio Unionum*, 'The union of unions'—meaning not only the union of the two kingdoms, but that to the uniting of kingdoms good advice is necessary, which is the business of that place." This stone with the Scotch arms, as already mentioned, was not in the *find* of stones at Drummond Place. Morer continuing says: "The northern boundary is the wall of the High Church (St Giles), which, with a few shops joining to it (leaving room for coaches to pass to the Parliament House) concludes the figure of this close, the beauty of their city."

Thirty-seven years before Morer's visit, the Commissioners of the Commonwealth Parliament, sitting at Dalkeith, ordered tradesmen to take down the royal arms from the King's seat in St Giles and from the Market Cross. This was done with the utmost indignity, and Nicoll adds:<sup>2</sup> "The same day (Saturday, 7th February 1652) the lyke was done at the entrie of the Parliament House and Nether Bow, quhair the King's airmes or portrat wes found; defacing and dinging down all there momentis and curious ensignes."

<sup>1</sup> *Early Travels in Scotland*, p. 280, P. Hume Brown.

<sup>2</sup> Nicoll's *Diary*, Ban. Club, p. 51.