

## III.

CORGARFF CASTLE, ABERDEENSHIRE. BY W. DOUGLAS  
SIMPSON, M.A., D.LITT., F.S.A. SCOT.

The castle of Corgarff, in the *quoad sacra* parish of that name, at the head of Strathdon (O.S. 6 inch, Aberdeenshire, Sheet 68), is one of the remotest castles in Aberdeenshire. It is also, alike from an historical and from an architectural view-point, one of the most interesting secular buildings in the county. The castle stands on an elevated and commanding position, at a height of 1416 feet above sea-level, overlooking the south bank of the River Don, here a slender, peaty stream. It is a conspicuous object from the turnpike, which ends at Allargue, and is well seen from almost every coign of vantage in the neighbourhood. Northward is the Don, and across it Allargue Hotel and House, with the famous Lecht Road to Tomintoul winding up over the hills to the background, whose lower slopes are swathed in plantations. Eastward, down the river, narrow foothills close in the view: in front, to the south, the brawling Cock Burn tumbles noisily down its little glen; and on the other sides rise the great bare, brown heath-covered masses of mountain that cradle the infant Don. Corgarff had formerly the reputation of being one of the most inaccessible and desolate districts of Scotland; and even now, off the highway, it is a bleak and almost uninhabited country, barren and windswept, the home not of man but of the deer and the harsh-throated mountain birds. With this scenery the little old tower is in fullest harmony, perched in sullen repellent strength on its high-set stance, surrounded by its sturdy loop-holed wall, whose obtrusive salients, thrust out on every side, seem to greet the peaceful visitor with the same defiance formerly extended to the armed cateran of other days.

The nucleus of the castle (see measured drawings, fig. 1) is a plain rubble-built tower of the sixteenth century, measuring 35 feet 11 inches in length (east and west) by 24 feet 9 inches in breadth. This tower has been extensively remodelled to serve the purposes of a fortified post garrisoned by the Government after the suppression of the last Jacobite rising. At the same time also wings, styled "pavilions" in the eighteenth century, were appended to each gable wall of the tower, and the whole was enclosed by a loop-holed curtain-wall, rectangular on plan with a salient on all four faces, similar in design to that erected at the same period round Braemar Castle, which also was converted into a garrisoned post after the "Forty-five." Unfortunately, the castle,

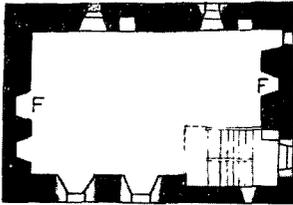
# CORGARFF CASTLE

SURVEYED BY W.D. SIMPSON AND  
T. L. TAYLOR, JUNE 28-29, 1926.  
DRAWN BY W.D. SIMPSON, JULY 1,  
1926.

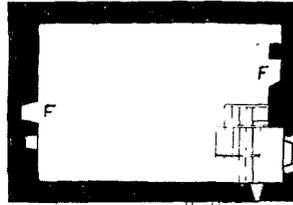
CAP-HOUSE



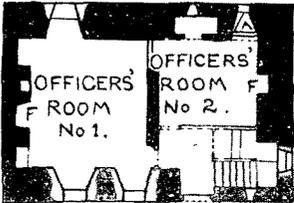
 16TH CENT.  
 1748  
 LATER  
 WOOD AND PLAS-  
TER WORK SHOWN  
IN OUTLINE.



3RD FLOOR

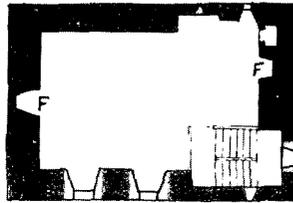


MACHICOLATION  
GARRET



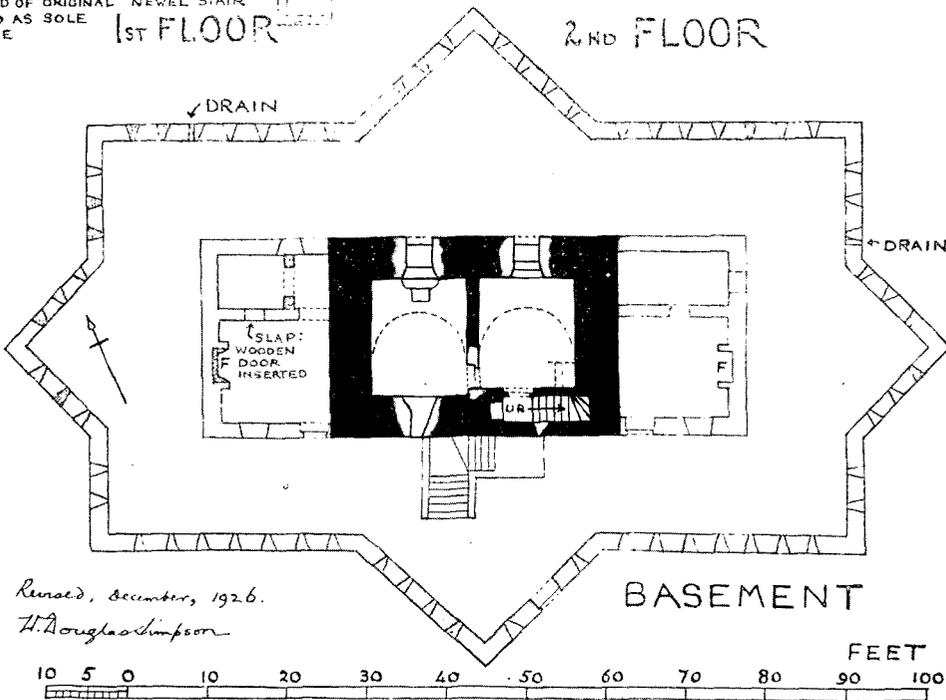
1ST FLOOR

A = SINK



2ND FLOOR

TREAD OF ORIGINAL  
USED AS SOLE  
HERE



Revised, December, 1926.  
H. Douglas Simpson

Fig. 1. Corgarff Castle: plans.

inhabited until a few years ago, is now fast falling to pieces: the roof and floors cannot last much longer, and the upper parts of the gables and the chimneys are in a very insecure condition. So melancholy a state of affairs has led me to draw up the following full description of the castle while this can still be done.<sup>1</sup>

While studying the architectural history of the building, I had the advantage of having before me photostatic reproductions of a sheet of measured drawings prepared by a Government surveyor very soon after its reconstruction in 1748. As explained below (p. 78), these drawings are now preserved in the Library of the British Museum. My paper was already in type when I became aware that there existed in the Museum other surveys of Corgarff Castle, including one showing it in the condition in which the Hanoverian engineers found it when they undertook its reconstruction. I have now (January 1927) had an opportunity to examine these additional drawings. As was to be anticipated, they reveal many new, and to some extent unexpected, features with regard to the earlier structural history of the building. To incorporate this additional material would have entailed very considerable recasting of my paper. It seemed preferable, therefore, in order to avoid so great a disturbance of type already set up, that the newly discovered plans should be discussed in an Additional Note at the end of the paper. The reader will of course understand that this extra matter amplifies, and in some respects revises, the conclusions stated in the main body of my paper. Wherever possible in the latter, references to the Additional Note have been inserted. The procedure adopted is not without its own value as showing how conclusions, based entirely upon the inspection of a building in its present state, may be confirmed or modified by the subsequent discovery of early plans. The paucity of such records in Scotland invests the present instance with a peculiar interest.

#### DESCRIPTION.

I. *The Tower: (a) Exterior.*—The south wall at the basement level shows two openings, of which one lights the west cellar, while the other is a loophole from the original service stair by which the two cellars were reached from the kitchen on the first floor. This loophole

<sup>1</sup> I have to acknowledge the assistance, in making my survey, of Mr Thornton L. Taylor, Aberdeen, who also took the photos at figs. 3 and 4. Figs. 2, 5, and 11 are from blocks kindly lent by *Aberdeen Newspapers, Ltd.* The plan at fig. 12 is reproduced, by permission of Dr Ross, from the *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, by D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, vol. ii. p. 94, fig. 559. I am held bound to acknowledge—and it is a pleasure to do so—that this paper has been written as part of a scheme of research into the early castles of the Mar district which is being conducted with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie Trustees.

is an unaltered opening of the sixteenth century, but is now masked by the porch which has been built against the tower on this side. The other opening in its present condition dates apparently from the eighteenth century, as it is adjusted so as barely to clear the west wall of the porch stair. On the first floor towards the east end is found the main door of the tower, at a height of 6 feet above the ground. It is 3 feet 6 inches broad and 7 feet  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. The jambs are in granite and chamfered with a  $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch splay. They are evidently original, but the lintel, which is an untooled slab of schist, has been renewed. The old wooden door still remains in good preservation, and is of a double thickness, formed by six vertical boards nailed on to twelve horizontals behind, giving a total thickness of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The old iron handle remains on the outside, and the massive wooden lock-case on the interior. The handle is placed so near the edge of the door that a part of the stone jamb adjacent has been roughly cut away to avoid the risk of skinned knuckles. The door is swung on two hinges, each with a long band nailed on to the wood. Some of the jamb-stones have sinkings on their ingoings that do not seem to refer to the present door.

The south front is lit on each of its three upper storeys by a pair of large oblong windows (see fig. 2). These are obvious insertions of the eighteenth century and are of a standard pattern, measuring 2 feet 7 inches broad and 4 feet high. They are roughly built without any moulding or chamfer, and are, or were, fitted with wooden casements. The sills are slightly sloped outward, and the ingoings are lintelled over with flat slabs. The sill of the west window on the first floor is formed by a tread taken from the original newel stair of the tower. This window is also distinguished from the others by having a roughly-formed relieving arch. An iron swivel for external shutters still remains in the wall beside each of the two windows at this level. The slapping out of all these windows is obvious. On the second floor-level, just to the east of and below the east window, one chamfered jamb-stone and the sole of an original window remain *in situ*. In this front are also visible (see fig. 3) four small loops which had afforded light to the original newel stair. The lowest of these is at the first floor-level, the uppermost in the cap-house. In the gable of the latter there is also a small window which had lit the room over the stairhead. All these five openings are now blocked, the present square stair being lit by windows slapped out on the east side. The blocking of the cap-house window appears to be more recent than that of the series of loopholes below. The low-pitched cap-house gable is at present finished off with flat skews built on sloping beds. At the eaves-level over the door

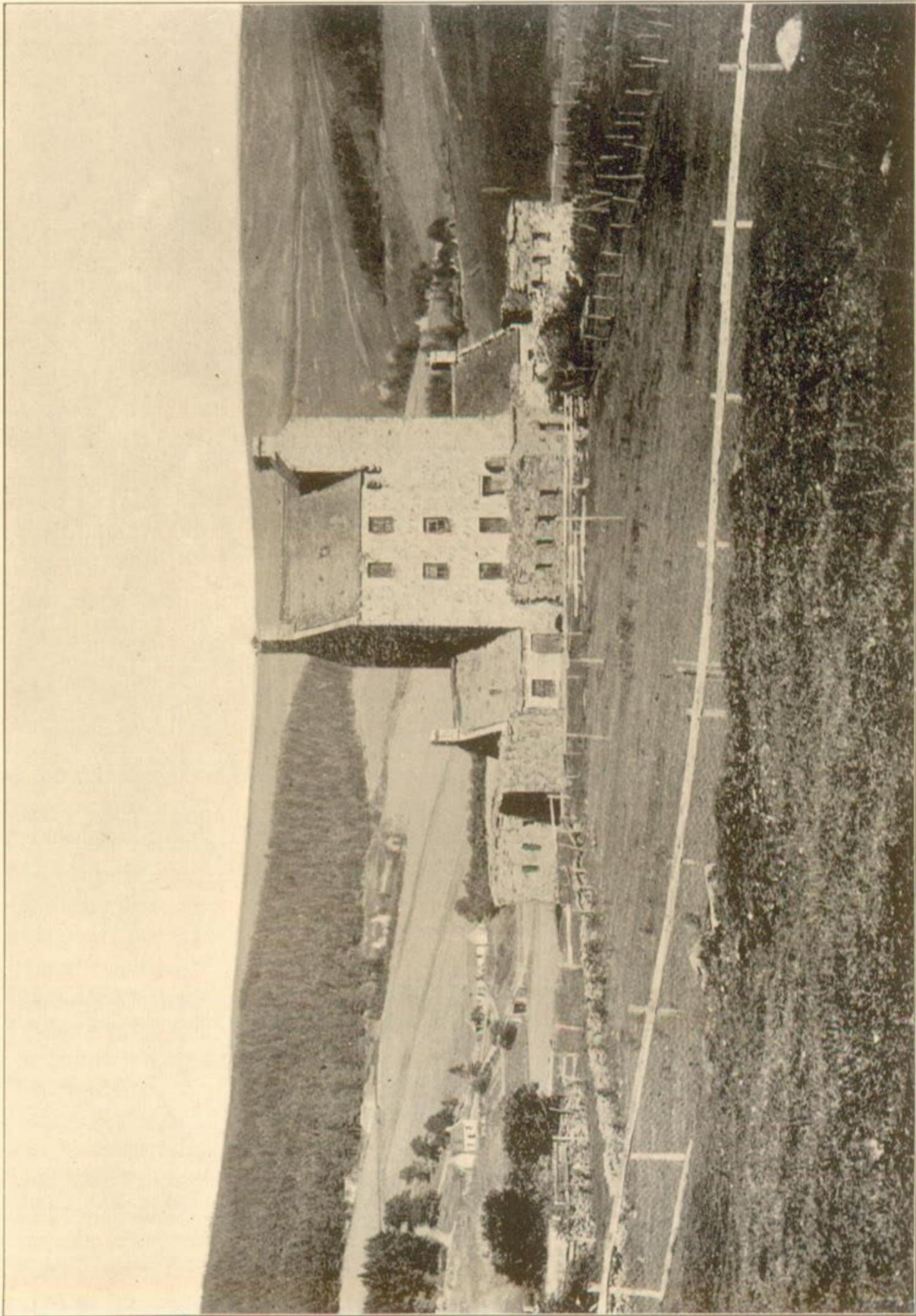


Fig. 2. Corgarff Castle: view from S.

remain two bold corbels of a machicolation (shown in figs. 2 and 3), the wall between them being raked back. Each corbel has consisted of three plain, rounded and unfilleted courses, the upper course of each being now ruined. The west face of the cap-house is not of stone but slated, and the edge of its south wall here shows a sloping raggle, indicating that there has been a higher level of building at this point, forming the chamber from which the machicolation was operated.

The north front shows on the ground level two large slapped doors opening into the cellars. These doors are very roughly constructed, with jambs made up of small stones. They have no check or moulding of any description, and provision for securing in place a wooden-framed door is very crudely sunk on the ingoings. On the first floor are three openings. The west one is an eighteenth-century window, clearly slapped, and later contracted by building up the lower portion. It now measures 2 feet 1 inch in breadth and 3 feet 6 inches high, is roughly built without any dressed stones, and has a wooden casement. The centre window is a small loop to a garderobe chamber. It is very rudely constructed and may have been refashioned in the eighteenth century. At that period, or later, it has been fitted with a wooden casement. The east window is ancient, and is well wrought in granite with a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chamfer. The sole is later, and is a rough, untooled stone: below it the masonry is much disturbed, and (as will appear from the interior description: see also plan of first floor) a sink-drain and spout have been withdrawn at this point. The jambs and lintel are socketed each for two bars and are grooved for glass, but no socket or groove is found in the later sole. This window is 2 feet 6 inches high and 1 foot  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches broad. On the second floor the only visible window is a small one near the east end. It is ancient, with well-wrought chamfered jambs and lintel in granite, the chamfer measuring  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth. The sill is not chamfered, but seems none the less to be original, as it is in granite and is properly wrought with a reprise at either end, on which the chamfer is

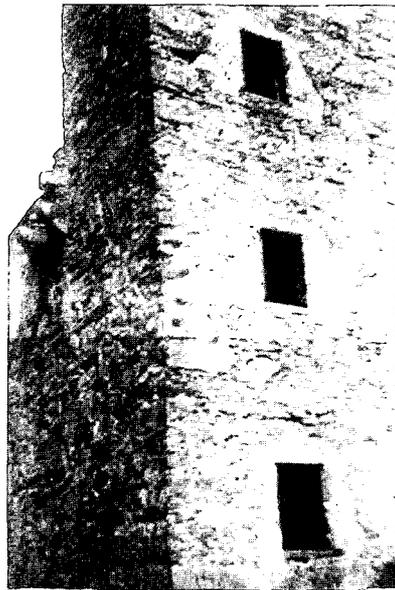


Fig. 3. Corgarff Castle: view of S.E. angle of tower, showing remains of machicolation over door, old loops built up in S. face of staircase, and large windows slapped out in E. face.

cut on the outside to mitre properly with the jambs. There has been one vertical bar, socketed in both sill and lintel, with two horizontal bars, and a groove for glass. This window is 1 foot 2 inches broad and 1 foot 10 inches high. On the upper floor are seen two windows, of which the west one is blocked. The east one measures 1 foot 5½ inches in breadth and 1 foot 10½ inches in height. It is an insertion, unchamfered, without bar-holes or groove for glass, and has a wooden casement.

The east wall shows three large windows, one above another, lighting the landings of the eighteenth-century square stair. These windows (shown in fig. 3) are all clearly secondary, roughly constructed without chamfer or check: they measure 2 feet in breadth and 3 feet in height. The upper two windows show in their soles a central socket apparently for a shutter-bolt. At the very top of the cap-house is an original window, lighting the closet over the stairhead. This window is wrought with weathered granite dressings showing a 3½-inch chamfer, a groove for glass, and a rebate for a shutter. It was defended by one vertical and two horizontal iron bars. The window measures 1 foot 1½ inches broad; its height was partly in the roof, and only the sill and the lower part of the two jambs thus remain. At the north side of this gable, on the third floor-level, is a blocked original window, showing the usual sixteenth-century chamfer. Its south jamb is built with two blocks of freestone. Clear evidence exists in the gable of a making-up above the north skew-putt, a vertical line of wall existing here, which suggests that there was originally a projecting turret at this point.

The west wall is featureless, except for some indications of a blocked window on the first floor-level, cut by the north side of the "pavilion" roof.

The two gables (see fig. 2) have each plain curved skew-stones and flat skews wrought on sloping beds. Each is topped with a large chimney-stalk having a plain cornice and blocking course. The upper part of the west chimney is in a ruined and most precarious state. The roof is high pitched and slated, with a stone ridge-cope. There is one skylight on the south side, and two on the north side. The tower is 33 feet in height to the present eaves-level, and shows the beautifully battered profile or entasis always found in old Scottish buildings.

The masonry of the tower (see fig. 3) is of the kind typical in Aberdeenshire during the sixteenth century, modified in this case by the local prevalence of a schistose stone readily splitting into longish blocks low in the course. It may be described as rough partly-coursed rubble with a fair admixture of pink granite boulders, but mainly consisting of flattish slabs of metamorphic rock as above described. As usual in

work of this century, pinnings are very freely employed; but I have not observed any oyster shells in this remote tower. The walls have all been "battered" over with rough-cast in the usual Scottish manner.

(b) *Interior: Basement.*—The walls of the tower here are over 5 feet thick and its interior is divided into two plain cellars, barrel-vaulted with a north-and-south axis. The height of the vaults at the apex is about 9 feet. The west cellar measures 14 feet 8 inches long by 12 feet broad, but the east cellar, of an equal breadth, is only 13 feet long, being somewhat curtailed by the straight stair leading to the upper floor. The two cellars communicate with each other by a door at the south end of their partition wall: and originally the straight service stair above mentioned was the only means of access to them, the two doors on the north side, as already stated, being insertions. The splaying back of the inner portions of these doors (see plan, fig. 1) suggests that they may have been slapped out from original loophole recesses. This view is confirmed by the fact that in both these doors the upper part of the inner ingoings is built of large stones, whereas the lower portions, below what would have been the original sole, are clearly secondary work of small stones. As we shall see, the eighteenth-century Government surveys of the castle, now preserved in the British Museum, show a loophole at this point in each of the two cellars. Roughly-contrived stone steps lead down into each cellar: the west one is floored with fine sand, probably fetched from the Don, but the eastern cellar is flagged. The west cellar is lit by a single window on the south side. In its present state this opening dates from the eighteenth century, and has been rather awkwardly contrived (see plan, fig. 1) so as just to clear the foot of the external stone stair outside. It is probable, however, that there was always a loophole in this position, and the inner part of the west ingoing appears to be original. That this was the case is now confirmed by the evidence of the survey, preserved in the British Museum, which shows the castle as it was before the eighteenth-century alterations (see fig. 13, and *infra*, Additional Note). In its present form the window has had two vertical bars, and its ingoing is lintelled over. The door between the two cellars has closed against the easternmost. There must always have been a door here, but it is clear that the door as now seen has been refashioned. Its north jamb has been rebuilt, the disturbed masonry being clearly visible in both cellars. This jamb is formed of old finely-wrought granite stones with a 2½-inch chamfer, but the other jamb is roughly constructed in small stones. The old wooden door, formed in two thicknesses, with five vertical boards on the east side, still remains in a half-destroyed condition, but the entry has now been roughly built up with dry stones. Both cellars have been plastered over, and

the lower parts of the walls of each are much blackened, as if through the action of fire. From the east cellar access is gained to the service stair by a door which has closed against the latter. The jambs are well wrought in granite, with a  $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch chamfer. The old wooden door still swings on its two large hinges, and is made up in two thicknesses, consisting of five vertical pieces on the stair side and eight horizontals on the cellar side.

On the west side of the stairfoot vestibule is a plain square aumbry. The stair is 2 feet 10 inches wide, is roofed over with ascending lintels, and has consisted of six straight steps, reaching to the first floor, after which it originally became a newel winding up in a square case in the south-east angle of the tower. One of the newel steps, as already mentioned, has been used as a threshold in a window on the first floor of the tower. The straight part of the stair is lit by a single small loop, now blocked by the porch outside.

*First Floor.*—The main floor of the tower is at present divided by a stone partition into two rooms. The west room is the full breadth of the tower, but the eastern one is curtailed by a wooden partition drawn across its south end in order to form a lobby, the floor of which is stone-flagged. Into this lobby the main door of the tower opens, as also the door from the landing of the service stair; while over this stair is formed the first flight of the wooden scale-and-platt stair by which the upper floors of the tower are now served.

The west room is a good apartment, measuring about 14 feet 9 inches by 15 feet 6 inches. The walls are plastered over, and the ceiling is in lath and plaster. In the west wall is a plain fireplace, and on either side of it are two large mural cupboards which have been fitted with shelving. The north cupboard has an elliptic arch which is higher than the present ceiling. It has every appearance of a blocked window recess, and this view derives support from the fact that (as indicated already) there are some traces in the outside wall of a window having once existed at this point. It has now been confirmed by the evidence of the Government survey prior to the reconstruction (see fig. 13, and *infra*, Additional Note). Between this cupboard and the fireplace is an aumbry. This room is lit by two large eighteenth-century windows on the south side and one to the north. The door of this room now serves ingloriously as the means of access up the first flight of the wooden stair, the treads of which have all disappeared. It is a plain but good door of panelled construction, and on the front (fortunately forming the under surface in its present state of misuse) is painted the legend "Officers No. 1."

The door of the other room on this floor is still *in situ*. It is of

similar pattern and is painted "Officers No. 2." This room measures about 11 feet 6 inches by 10 feet 6 inches, and is lit by a single window on the north wall, as well as by a glass light inserted in its south wall, which (as stated already) is merely a wooden partition. The window in the north wall has been already described, so far as its external features are concerned. Except for its sill, it is an unaltered window of the original tower and is set in an arched recess, the lower partition of which, below the sill, contains a sink, whose drain was blocked externally when the present sill was inserted, apparently in the eighteenth century. It thus appears that in the original arrangement this room was the kitchen, and it would be conveniently served by the stair from the cellarage below. To the west of this window is a mural garderobe chamber, measuring 5 feet 9 inches by 2 feet 3 inches, lit by a narrow loop, but without the usual nook for a lamp. No trace of the garderobe seat and flue can now be seen. In the east wall of the room is a plain fireplace. At the north end of the opposite wall is a door leading through to the other room, but now blocked with lath and plaster. The room is all plastered and has a lath and plaster ceiling.

The wooden stair of the eighteenth century, which now occupies the place of the original vice at the south-east corner of the tower, is on the scale-and-platt design, consisting of six flights, each of six steps, 3 feet  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. It is now in a state of great dilapidation, many of the steps having decayed or been removed. The three windows which light it to the east have already been described. They are insertions of the eighteenth century, set in ingoings which are covered in by heavy flat slabs. Of the original loops in the south wall, which had lit the previous stair, and though blocked are still visible from the outside, no trace can be seen on the interior wall-face, which is plastered over. The wooden staircase forms a rectangular projection intruding into the space of the two upper rooms and the garret.

*Second Floor.*—The second floor of the tower is now all in one large room, measuring about 27 feet 3 inches by 17 feet. The walls are plastered and the ceiling is of lath and plaster. At either end is a plain fireplace, in the south wall are two windows of the eighteenth century and in the north wall at the east end is an unaltered original window, with a gible-checked aumbry adjoining it in the east wall. West of this window there was originally a garderobe, as on the floor below; but the inner wall of the garderobe has been removed, and the jambs of its loophole are withdrawn and the opening blocked so effectively as to leave no evidence at all in the wall outside. The ingoing of the window beside this garderobe was arched, but the arch was partly removed when the garderobe chamber was dismantled, and the masonry

thus left in the air is cased corbel-wise in wood and plaster. This room would seem to have been a common apartment or barrack-room for the garrison: it is labelled "Men's Barrack" in the measured drawings (fig. 13) prepared for the reconstruction of 1748.

*Third Floor.*—The third floor also is a single room, of similar size to the one below and very similarly arranged. There is a plain fireplace at either end. It may be mentioned that several of the fireplaces in the tower have an iron bar set across the flue behind the lintel, doubtless for the purpose of hanging a pot. On the lintel of the west fireplace have been incised, in very neat mitred lettering of eighteenth-century fashion, the date 1748, and the initials I. S., while below in the same style are carved the initials D. S., G. S., and C. Subsequently the lintel was plastered over; the fall of the plaster has now revealed the lettering. On the south side are two windows of the standard eighteenth-century pattern. In the north wall also are two windows, of which the east one belongs to the military occupation, but the west one is original, although now blocked. In the west wall at its south corner, and in the north wall east of the ancient window, are large mural cupboards which have been shelved: to the east of the other window in the north wall is an aumbry, and adjoining this there is an original window in the east wall, now blocked. The ceiling of this room is boarded and is now about to fall. Around the walls are various evidences pointing to the former existence of racks, suitable for muskets, as if the room had been used as an armoury. There are also marks on the ceiling and side walls which show that at one period this room has been subdivided into two. Above the stair-landing at this level there is an oversailing mass of masonry, now obscured by plaster, which is doubtless connected with the machicolation chamber that had originally opened at this point.

*Garret.*—Above this room a garret is formed under the high-pitched roof. It has a fireplace at either end, and beside the west fireplace is an aumbry. In the east wall at the north-east corner is a recess, perhaps representing the original entry to the angle turret which (as we saw) there is reason to believe once existed at this point. The floor of the garret is in a highly dangerous condition, many of the joists being rotten, while some of the boarding has disappeared. The roof, which is now in a very bad state, is of plain construction, with tie-beams and plain hanging pieces. It is now open to the ridge, but was formerly lathed over at the ties. The timbers of the roof may be the original eighteenth-century work, but the slates which now cover it are comparatively modern, as also are the iron skylights. Originally the roof would no doubt be covered with massive slabs of fissile rock similar to that still found on the roofs of the two "pavilions."

At the south-east corner of the tower, the cap-house projecting above the eaves-level contains an upper chamber, reached by wooden steps and a landing built against the outside of the main staircase. These steps and landing have now been removed, but from the marks remaining it is evident that there were four steps up to the landing and one from the landing up to the door of the chamber, which is a mere closet, measuring 7 feet 10 inches by 6 feet 11 inches. It was lit by two original windows in the east and south walls respectively, of which the latter was subsequently built up. The closet has plastered walls and a plain slated roof with tie-beams but no hanging pieces.

(c) *Porch*.—In its original condition the doorway on the first floor of the tower would doubtless be reached by a ladder, drawn up by the inmates in time of peril. This somewhat archaic mode of access was still occasionally employed in the sixteenth century, or even later, as at Coxton Tower, Morayshire, dating from 1644. But in connection with the eighteenth-century reconstruction a handsome outer stair and porch were built in order to give a more convenient access to the ancient door. Unfortunately, the porch has completely collapsed in quite recent years, crushing the stair, so that the whole is now a distorted ruin. The stair was built in two flights, each of six steps, with a landing between them, the lower flight ascending at right angles to the tower, while the upper flight continued eastward along the wall-face to the outer door, which opened into a porch built with a lean-to roof against the tower. The porch was lit by a window on the south side. The stair was about 5 feet broad between walls finished with a plain flat coping. The whole construction has evidently been very rudely built, with little mortar, and had no bond with the tower—deficiencies that go far to explain its utter ruin.

II. *The Pavilions*.—To either gable-end of the tower have been added wings of the same breadth as the tower, and measuring 16 feet in length (see fig. 2). The eighteenth-century name for these appended structures was "pavilions." Each pavilion has had a plain gable built with flat skewers on sloping beds, and surmounted by a chimney-stalk of the same pattern as those built on the tower: the east chimney, however, has almost disappeared. Each pavilion has a simple tied roof, covered with massive slabs of fissile stone. Each is provided with a door and a window on the south side, the door in both being built close up against the tower, into whose walls the pavilions do not bond, although a jambstone of the east door has been tusked into the adjoining quoin of the keep. The doors measure about 6 feet 3 inches in height and 3 feet 1 inch broad. Both doors have jambs well wrought in weathered granite with a  $2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch chamfer: these are doubtless old stones re-used. In each door the lintel is an untooled slab of schist. In the west door

the two iron crooks of the hinges still remain on the west side. The window on the south side in each pavilion measures 2 feet 9 inches in breadth by 4 feet in height: these windows are thus of the standard dimensions found in the eighteenth-century windows inserted in the same front of the tower. In addition to these windows each pavilion has also one other window, of which that in the west pavilion pierces the north wall, while the window in the east pavilion is found in its gable. The former window is of the standard dimensions, the other measures 2 feet by 3 feet. These windows are all perfectly plain, and were no doubt fitted with wooden casements.

Each pavilion consists of a single storey, divided into two portions by a cross wall running from east to west, forming a larger or southern room measuring about 13 feet 6 inches by 12 feet 6 inches, and a northern room measuring 13 feet 6 inches by 6 feet. The large room thus formed has in each pavilion a plain fireplace in a breast constructed in the gable wall: in the west pavilion the fireplace has been narrowed by inserted cheeks of masonry, apparently of quite recent date. In this pavilion the smaller or north room has been subsequently further divided by a cross partition which butts against the window recess in its north wall, so that the window is made available to light each subdivision. This cross wall being near the east end of the north room, a lobby is thus formed, entered by a door from the main room and having another door into the inner chamber. From the latter a door, framed in wood, has been hacked out at a still later date in order to establish direct communication with the main room. On each side of the door from the lobby into the inner chamber are three round holes not opposite each other, and fitted with wooden pegs now cut flush. Probably these were for a framed door. The main room has been ceiled with lath and plaster, partly in the roof. The walls of this room have been plastered and whitewashed, while the inner compartments were whitewashed on the stone. In the east pavilion the smaller or north room has never been subdivided. This room had latterly been the wine-cellar, as marks of partitions show on the plaster: it is lit by the window in the east gable. Both rooms in this wing are ceiled in lath and plaster, the smaller room at a lower level. The door into the wine-cellar has closed against it. In both pavilions the main room has a stone-flagged floor. The masonry of these additions is not dissimilar to that of the tower. Indeed, owing to the marked character of the fissile stone found in the neighbourhood, it has resulted that building of all periods in this castle approximates very closely to the same general aspect.

III. *The Curtain*.—By the eighteenth-century alterations, the original military features of the tower have been almost completely destroyed,

and only the vaulted basement and the door placed on the first floor, and protected by the machicolation overhead, remain to remind us of its primitive character. A utilitarian plainness which falls far short of austerity, and on a close view becomes almost vulgar in the general neglect, is the leading characteristic of the building in its present form. Under the new arrangements all the fortification was concentrated in the curtain: and this, against anything short of cannon, must be accounted in truth a very formidable defence. In general plan (see fig. 1) it is oblong, concentrically set to the tower and its "ekes" at a distance of about 12 feet. On each of the four faces is a right-angled salient, giving a perfect flanking defence on all quarters. Measured by itself the oblong will be about 97 feet by 53 feet over the walls, while the salients

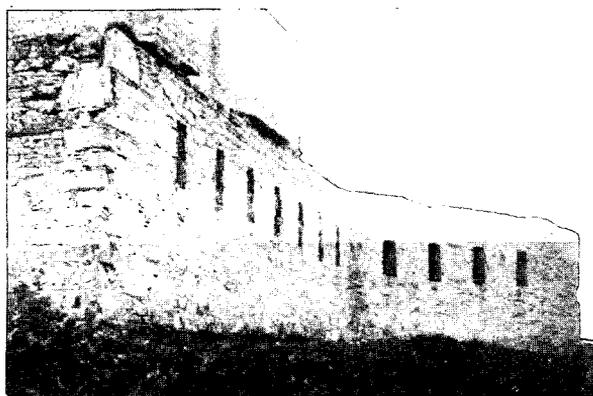


Fig. 4. Corgarff Castle: view of E. section of N. curtain, looking W.

on the long faces have sides externally measuring about 21 feet, and those on the short faces sides of about 16 feet 6 inches. The curtain wall is 2 feet thick and about 12 feet high, and had a plain coping with outward slope, of which some portions remain. The masonry is very poor, and the separate sections are not properly bonded into each other at the angles (see fig. 4). The curtain is pierced by a regular series of loopholes, placed 3 feet 7 inches internally apart from each other and varying from 3 feet 10 inches to 5 feet 2 inches in height above the *terreplein*. These loopholes are about 4½ inches broad internally, splayed outwards to a breadth of about 1 foot. They are 2 feet high and are lintelled over, while the sills are slightly plunged. In each section of the long faces there are, or were, 7 of these loopholes: in each short face there are 3 loops in the north section and 2 in the south. The east and west salients have 3 loops in each face: the north salient

has 4 on each face, while the south salient has 4 on its western face, and 1 on either side of the entrance in the middle of its east face. A number of these loopholes have subsequently been carefully built up. The curtain, like the rest of the castle, is now in a bad state, and has suffered wanton destruction in recent times. In the west section of the south front (see fig. 2) a length of some 17 feet has been removed, and there is a similar breach about 10 feet long in the eastern section.

The outer gate is formed with granite jambs and schistose lintels all carefully wrought, but without a chamfer. It measures 4 feet broad and 6 feet 5 inches high. (This height, it should be observed, is the same as that of the doors into the two pavilions.) The gate or door was swung on two hinges on the east side, of which the upper crook remains, while the provision cut in the stone for the lower is still apparent.

From the gate a causeway of flags leads to the foot of the porch-stair, but there is no indication above the turf that the rest of the courtyard area was paved or cobbled. Under the third loophole from the west end of the north curtain, and again under the same loophole reckoned from the north end of the east curtain, is found a drain measuring about 8 inches in width.

It is interesting to compare this curtain at Corgarff Castle with the similar work erected at the same period round the castle of Braemar. Braemar Castle (see plan, fig. 8, and view, fig. 5) is a large and tall tower-house built on the L-plan, the long sides of which are nearly equal, measuring some 47 feet and 51 feet respectively. Hence, for the purpose of drawing the curtain round it, the castle had in effect to be treated as a square having the above dimensions. This has conditioned the lay-out of the curtain, which, instead of being oblong, as at Corgarff, is practically a square 80 feet each way, having a salient in the centre of each face just as at Corgarff.<sup>1</sup> The four sides of the Braemar curtain being equal, it was not necessary to differentiate the sizes of the salients, as was done on the two long and two short sides at Corgarff. The Braemar salients are thus all of equal size, having sides 21 feet 6 inches long—the measurement adopted in the two larger salients at Corgarff. At Braemar we have worked out in logical completeness the ideas of symmetry which bulked so large in the military engineering of the period—as evidenced, for example, at Ruthven Barracks, in Badenoch, built in 1718. The Braemar curtain is set out very nearly within a circle of 58-foot radius, the centre of which is struck almost exactly at the re-entrant angle of the tower-house which the curtain defends.

<sup>1</sup> The east salient has been truncated and rebuilt in modern times with a cross wall, loop-holed and battlemented in imitation of the older curtain whose symmetry it utterly destroys.

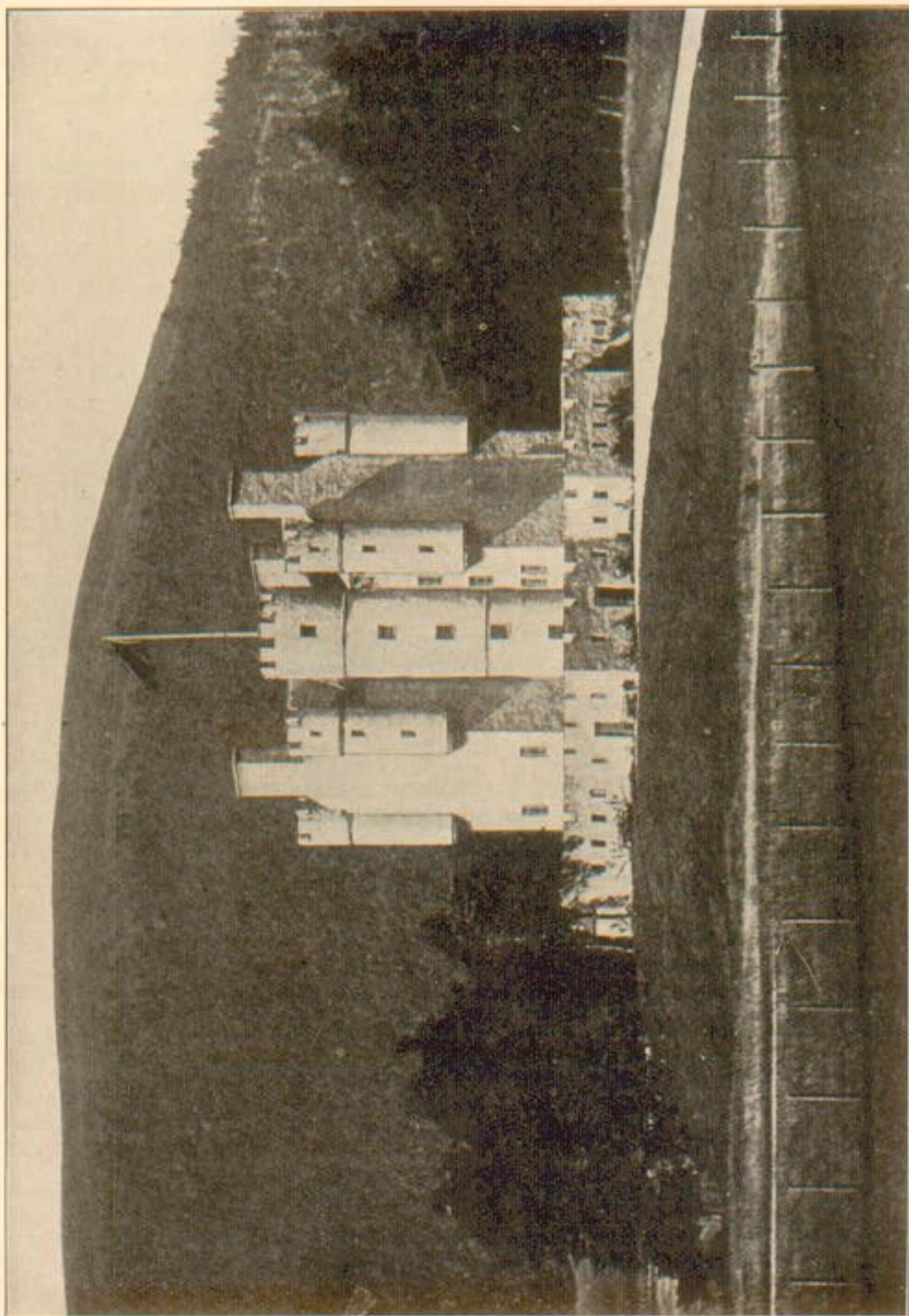


Fig. 5. Braemar Castle: view from S.E.

A remarkable feature at Braemar is the existence of four entrances through the curtain, all of which seem ancient. Two of them are specially protected by a covered passage or porch, with an outer door at right angles to the curtain.<sup>1</sup> The loopholes, except where interrupted by these entrances, are arranged in groups of five on each section of the four sides, and groups of four on each side of the salients. In dimensions and spacing they are very similar to the Corgarff loopholes,<sup>2</sup> and the same correspondence holds with regard to the two original doors at the south-east angle. The Braemar curtain is of just the same thickness and height as its Donside counterpart, but it has been finished with a modern mock battlement.<sup>3</sup> These two examples of eighteenth-century military engineering in Aberdeenshire are of very considerable interest, and it is greatly to be deplored that the Corgarff curtain, like the rest of this misused castle, is in so ruinous and neglected a state.

IV. *Outworks*.—On the ground sloping northwards from the castle to the Don is a large oblong enclosure, measuring about 75 yards north and south by 30 yards in a transverse direction. This enclosure is marked off by thick stone-and-turf dykes evidently of considerable age, and a few old ash trees outline it at the north-east angle. In all probability this was the garden of the garrison.<sup>4</sup> The area on the south side is more level and might be used as a drill ground. It is

<sup>1</sup> These porches are now built up and converted to other uses. Neither is shown on the eighteenth-century surveys, but they are clearly of considerable age.

<sup>2</sup> The Braemar loopholes are 1 foot 2 inches broad and 2 feet 7 inches high externally: internally they are 6½ inches broad and 2 feet 1 inch high, the sills being rather more plunged than at Corgarff.

<sup>3</sup> Similar battlements now also exist on the two-storeyed angle turrets and the stair tower of the castle. Eighteenth-century drawings uniformly show the turrets and stair tower as capped with the usual conical roof, and the curtain wall finished with a flat coping as at Corgarff. The date of the alteration is established by a footnote in Elizabeth Taylor's *Braemar Highlands*, 1869, p. 24: "The appearance of the castle was very much changed soon after the beginning of the present century; the pepper-box turret, etc., were about that time altered to their present shape." In *Aberdeen Journal Notes and Queries*, vol. viii. p. 70, is printed a most interesting survey of Braemar Castle, dated 25th May 1807, in which the building is described as being then in very bad repair. As the report indicates that repairs were then in view, it is probable that the alteration of the turrets and the curtain wall-head was done subsequently to that date. Since this paper was read, the discovery of further eighteenth-century surveys in the British Museum (see *infra*, Additional Note, p. 95) throws new light upon these points. A very interesting view—Catalogue, No. K xlix. (13) 2*f*—shows the castle in its ruined state, as after the burning in 1689. The turrets are of ordinary Scottish type, one storey high, and between them the constricted gable is carried up vertically and then finished with crow-steps. The upper part of the stair tower is gone. Two elevations—*ibid.*, No. K xlix. (13) 2*d* and *c*—drawn for or after the restoration, show the turrets still of one storey: they and the staircase are finished off with coned roofs, the gables are now flat-skewed, and the chimneys have heavy eighteenth-century moulded copes. The main house is shown a storey higher than the wing.

<sup>4</sup> This garden is not indicated in Cordiner's plate, fig. 9, but it is shown in outline in the "Design for Corgarff Castle" (see Additional Note, *infra*, p. 96).

evident that an attempt has been made to enclose this area by an earthwork on its east side. This earthwork begins at about 18 yards south of the south-east angle of the curtain. It consists of a bank with a *glacis* outside and a fire-trench within, the whole being admirably contrived to provide cover for a line of musketeers who would command a magnificent field over the Cock Burn valley. From the point of commencement—where it seems to curve, or to have been intended to curve, inward towards the castle gate—the earthwork extends southward for some 40 yards: it then forms a re-entrant by turning in towards the west for about 15 yards, at an angle of 135°, after this it continues south again for a distance of about 80 yards. In this section it is very well preserved, the trench being about 3 feet deep, reckoned from the crest of the bank, which is some 7 feet broad at the base. This earthwork is at present quite open on its south flank, but it seems reasonably certain that there was an intention, never completed, to form a large parade ground or defensive enclosure south of the castle. A design for such an enclosure, elaborately entrenched, is preserved in the British Museum (see Additional Note, *infra*, p. 102).

The small rill of the *Allt Bad Mhic Griogair*,<sup>1</sup> hurrying briskly in a diagonal direction across this area from south-west to north-east, is brought into the re-entrant angle of the earthwork and carried north along the inner side of its salient portion to the close proximity of the castle, for which it might form a useful auxiliary water-supply.

#### HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Commanding the passes of the Dee, the Avon, and the Don, the strategic position of Corgarff Castle was one of much importance—as indeed its history sufficiently proves. It is stated to have been “erected for a hunting-seat by Thomas Erskine, Earl of Mar, in 1537.”<sup>2</sup> With such a date there is nothing out of harmony in the ascertainable features of the original condition of the tower: but the representative of the ancient Earls of Mar in 1537 was not Thomas but John Erskine; nor in any case was he in possession of Corgarff at this date, for the lands and dignity of the Earldom, as is well known, had been annexed by the Crown in 1435, and extensive alienations had since been made. On 10th December 1507, the forest of Corgarff, along with other lands in the Mar Earldom, was granted by James IV. to Alexander, afterwards created first Lord

<sup>1</sup> “Burn of Macgregor’s clump or thicket. *Bad*, in this name, may mean *hamlet*.”—J. Macdonald, *Place-Names in West Aberdeenshire*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Laing, *Donean Tourist*, p. 22.

Elphinstone,<sup>1</sup> who subsequently was settled by the King in Kildrummy Castle, the old capital messuage of the Mar Earldom.<sup>2</sup> If the date usually assigned to the foundation of Corgarff Castle has any basis in fact, it may have followed upon the grant of the forest to Elphinstone; and this is rendered all the more likely by the circumstance that neither in the original charter, nor in a subsequent confirmation of 12th August 1513,<sup>3</sup> is there any mention of a fortalice upon the Corgarff lands. On the occasion of the marriage between his eldest son Robert and Margaret Drummond of Innerpeffray, Alexander, second Lord Elphinstone, by a charter dated at Stirling 3rd September 1546, granted to Margaret in life-rent, and to his son Robert heritably, the lands of Corgarff and others. The charter was followed by a precept of sasine, dated 4th September, and two days later was confirmed in a royal charter issued by the Queen-Mother.<sup>4</sup> In none of these documents do we find any mention of a fortalice on the lands of Corgarff: and as by this deed of 1546 these lands first became a separate property, assigned to the Master of Elphinstone and his wife, it is most probable that the tower may have been erected for their residence. That it was built as a hunting-lodge is in no way unlikely, but doubtless its military position was also held in view—just as Blairfindy Castle in Banffshire, also occupying a strategic point, was a hunting-seat of the Earls of Huntly. In the course of the sixteenth century most of the Corgarff property passed into the hands of the Forbese of Towie, as vassals of Lord Elphinstone. At a subsequent period the lands were recovered by the Erskine Earls of Mar; and in the final settlement between the Erskines and the Elphinstones, in 1626, the latter pledged themselves “to flit and remove fra all and hail the saidis landis and barronie of Kildromie and fra the castellis of Kildromie and Cargarff, houses and biggingis thairof, and to deliver the keyes of the sañ to the said nobill erle his said sone and thair forsaidis, and that betuixt the day and dait heirof and the fyvetene day of September nixtocũ in this instant zeir of God I<sup>m</sup> sex hundreth twentie sax zeiris.”<sup>5</sup> After the forfeiture of the Earl of Mar in 1716, the lands passed to the Skellater branch of the Forbes family.

At a *sederunt* of the Privy Council held in Edinburgh on 18th June 1607, a complaint was lodged in his father's name by Alexander, Master

<sup>1</sup> *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, 1424-1513, pp. 675-6, No. 3159.

<sup>2</sup> For the annexation of the Earldom of Mar to the Crown, and the subsequent alienations of its territories, see my *The Castle of Kildrummy: Its Place in Scottish History and Architecture*, chap. iv., section 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1424-1513, p. 845, No. 3875.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1546-80, p. 1, No. 2; see also Sir W. Fraser, *The Lords Elphinstone of Elphinstone*, vol. i. pp. 84, 93, 94. The castle is not mentioned in a subsequent charter of 27th July 1550 (see *Registrum Magni Sigilli, ut supra*, p. 113, No. 488).

<sup>5</sup> Mar Peerage Case, 1868-71, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 184.

of Elphinstone, in the following terms:—"On 14th May last, at night, Alexander Forbes of Towie, Robert Forbes in Glaik of Towie, Alexander Forbes in Dyksyde, Tobias Lonkaird in Kinbothok, Alexander Walker there, Frances McRobie there, and George McRobie, piper, with others, came to his fortalice of Torgarffa, and with 'grite geistis, foir-hammeris,' and other instruments, forcibly broke the gate of the said place; which they have fortified as a house of war, and still keep, assisted by a number of Highland thieves and limmers."<sup>1</sup> The defendants, not appearing in answer to this complaint, were denounced as rebels, but nothing further seems to be on record about the matter. The disturbed state of the district at this period is illustrated also by another extract from the Privy Council Register, under date 25th July 1611, at Edinburgh:—"Complaint by Alexander, Lord Elphingstoun, and by William Reid, Thomas Schiphird, and James McKomeis, the said Lord's bowmen and herds of his lands of Kildrymmie, as follows:—In July 1609, Thomas Grant *alias* McPaul Grant in Davey in Straithspey, Johnne and James Grantis, his sons, Johnne Gordoun *alias* Johnne the Kathrene, there, Petir McRobert McEwne in Straithspay, Donald McAllister Gillichallum in Badyenoch, Duill Oig McGillichalliche there, Gillichallum McAllaster VcGillichallum there, Johnne McWilliam McEane, John McInnes in Stradowne, Allaster Rirche [? Riache] McHardie there, Angus McIndow Vig in Lochaber, and Findlay Bandie *alias* McInteir there, 'all brokin hielandmen' and sorners of clans, with others to the number of thirty, all armed with bows, darlochs [quivers], swords, gauntlets, platesleeves and other weapons, came to the said bowmen in the said Lord's scheils of his lands of Corgarff lying in the barony of Kildremy, bound them fast, and then assaulted them and left them for dead, taking away twelve sheep and four nolt. Again, in August last, the said defenders, with the like convocation, all armed as said is, came to the said scheils, slew four sheep and two kye, assaulted his said servants, and reft the whole butter and cheese in the said scheils. Pursuer appearing by Alexander, Lord of Kildrymmie, defenders, for not appearing, are to be denounced rebels."<sup>2</sup>

In Sir James Balfour's Collections, made during the first half of the seventeenth century, "Corgarffe, quherin the Earle of Mar has a very strong castle," is included among a list of "glens on the north syde of the river Done, above Kildrummey Castle, in Mar."<sup>3</sup> Corgarff, of course, is on the south side of the Don.

In June 1645 Corgarff Castle was occupied by Montrose, after he

<sup>1</sup> *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. vii. p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ix. pp. 230-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 79, note 1.

had sent his second-in-command, "Colkitto" Macdonald, to recruit among the western clans. Baillie's march north, threatening the Gordons, drew the Marquis away from his mountain fastness, without awaiting Macdonald; and the brief campaign ensued that led to the crushing defeat of the Covenanting general at Alford (2nd July 1645). At the time of Montrose's visit the castle was in ruins—"ad dirutam arcem de Kargarf secessit,"<sup>1</sup> writes his chaplain Wishart, the historian of his wars. It must subsequently have been repaired, at least enough to make it habitable, as it was burned by the Jacobites in 1689 or 1690, in order to avoid its being used as a garrisoned post by the Government party—a fate suffered on the same occasion by the two other Mar strongholds, Braemar and Kildrummy. After the collapse of the Jacobite effort, the Earl of Mar drew up a memorandum of his losses incurred through the burning of the three castles, and in this document the following reference is made to Corgarff:—<sup>2</sup>

"In the nixt place was burnt to him his castle of Corgarf upon the water of Don, consisting of a tower house and jam, thrie storie high, which cannot be repared in the same conditione under thrie hundred pound sterline."

This brief description of the castle as it then stood is interesting. A "jam" in old Scots is the wing of a building: the word is regularly applied to the limb or right-angled projection of tower-houses built on the L-plan. In this same document it is so used of Braemar Castle, which is very correctly described "a great body of ane house, a jam and a staircase"—*i.e.* a tower-house on the L-plan, with a stair-tower in the re-entrant angle.<sup>3</sup> But it is a little puzzling to find Corgarff Castle described as a "tower-house and jam"; for the tower here is a plain rectangular building without a wing, and there is not a shred of evidence that it has ever been anything else. The word "jam" here must be used in the reference to some annexe in the form of "laign-biggings," appended to the tower somewhat after the fashion of the present eighteenth-century "ekes." That there was some such building before the last reconstruction is rendered likely through the existence in the eighteenth-century additions of older chamfered door jambs evidently re-used from some previous part of the castle.

<sup>1</sup> *The Memoirs of James, Marquis of Montrose*, by Rev. George Wishart, D.D., ed. Rev. A. D. Murdoch and H. F. Morland Simpson, p. 393: "*ne hostes in campestribus locis deprehensum equitum peditumque multitudine obruerent: illic vero montibus vicinus, nihil sibi ab illis metuebat.*"

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. Fraser, *The Melvilles, Earls of Melville, and the Leslies, Earls of Leven*, vol. ii. p. 168. The document is reproduced also in my *Castle of Kildrummy*, p. 246. For a notice of the burning of Corgarff and Braemar Castles, see also *The Leven and Melville Papers*, ed. W. L. Melville, p. 452, quoted *infra*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> See the plan, fig. 8.

In the memorandum above referred to, the Earl of Mar, after setting forth the extent of his losses occasioned by the burning of his three castles, petitioned the Government that such forfeitures and fines as might be levied upon tenants of his own who had borne arms in the rising should be applied towards the restoration of the buildings. This seems to have been done so far as Kildrummy and Corgarff were concerned, as the former was inhabited down to the forfeiture of the Mar estates in 1716, and perhaps even later;<sup>1</sup> while Corgarff, as we shall see, played its part in the Fifteen and the Forty-five. Braemar Castle, however, remained a ruin until taken over by the Government in 1748.<sup>2</sup> In the Poll Book of 1696 tenants are entered as in Corgarff and in Castleton, but no mention is made specifically of anybody dwelling in the castle itself.<sup>3</sup>

When the Earl of Mar launched the first Jacobite rising from his ancestral castle of Kildrummy, about the end of August 1715, Corgarff Castle figured as a rendezvous. "From Kildrummy, where he was joined by a number of men, Mar marched his troops to Corgarff, another Erskine stronghold, where his forces again received considerable additions, and where he obtained a large and much-needed supply of ammunition. At Corgarff Mar and his little army remained encamped 'some days,' after which they proceeded to Braemar,"<sup>4</sup> where the standard of King James was raised on 6th September 1715.

Thirty years later, in the last rising, the castle again played its rôle. "I am also informed," writes the Rev. John Bisset, minister of St Nicholas Church in Aberdeen, in his diary,<sup>5</sup> under date 20th February 1746, recording the movements of the rebels, "that a man from Strathdon reports that the Spanish arms and ammunition, carried about with them, is to be brought from Strathbogie to the old Castle of Corgarf: if so, they infallibly design to wheel south about again from Corgarf, through the head of Glencairn, Crathie, Brae Marr, Glenshee, Strathardle, and Athole, through where a great body of men can never follow them, if other methods be not fallen upon them as yet." The ammunition "dump" was in fact duly made; but the proposed movement of the insurgents, as expounded by the reverend strategist, was never carried

<sup>1</sup> See my *Castle of Kildrummy*, pp. 247, 255-6.

<sup>2</sup> See *Historical Papers relating to the Jacobite Period, 1699-1750*, ed. Col. J. Allardyce, vol. ii. pp. 603-4, 606.

<sup>3</sup> *List of Pollable Persons within the Shire of Aberdeen*, ed. J. Stuart, vol. i. pp. 536-7. I have verified the printed text from p. 605 of the original Poll Book in the University Library at Aberdeen.

<sup>4</sup> *Braemar: An Unconventional Guide Book and Literary Souvenir*, by the Hon. Stuart Erskine, p. 66. Mr Erskine informs me that this account of Mar's movements is drawn from family papers in his own possession. Cf. *A Guide to Donside*, 6th edition, 1866, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. i. p. 383.

out, as the castle was promptly raided by a party of the Government troops. The Jacobites were forced to quit in a hurry, leaving the greater part of their stores behind. The affair is vividly described in a letter written from Aberdeen on 6th March 1746, by Alexander Stuart of Dunearn, Captain in Lord Mark Kerr's regiment of Dragoons, to his brother, James Stuart of Drumsheuch.<sup>1</sup>

"I returned on Wednesday from an expedition into the Highlands of Aberdeenshire, fifty miles from hence, to destroy a Magazine of the Rebels at Corgarff, which lies near the head of the Don. Three hundred foot commanded by Major Morris, and one hundred Dragoons commanded by me—the whole under the command of Lord Ancrum, were ordered for that duty. We marched from this on Friday, 28th February, in a snowy day to *Monimuss*, Sir Archibald Grant's house. Next day over mountains and Moors almost impassible at any time of the year, but much more so when covered with snow, to a place called Tarland. As soon as they saw us directing our March thither, they suspected our design on the Magazine there, and some rebels who lived there sent away an Express immediately to acquaint the Garrison, and to Glenbucket, who was with some men at Glenlivet above Strathdon, about Ten miles above the Castle.

"On Saturday<sup>2</sup> morning we marched from Tarland, a most terrible march, to the Castle, which stands on the side of the Don, where I daresay never Dragoons were before, nor ever will be again, nor foot neither, unless Highlanders! Though we marched early in the morning it was past four before we arrived there. We found it abandoned by the Garrison, but so lately, that the fire was burning, and no living creature in the house but a poor cat sitting by the fire. They had thrown the barrels of powder down the bank into the river in order I suppose to destroy it, but had not time—and had conveyed the arms

<sup>1</sup> Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. i. pp. 310-2.

<sup>2</sup> This must be Sunday. The chronology of the expedition may be worked out thus:

*Friday, 28th February.*—Aberdeen to Monymusk.

*Saturday, 1st March.*—Monymusk to Tarland. The route would be *via* the Kirk of Alford, Craigievar, Corse, and the Slack of Tillylodge.

*Sunday, 2nd March.*—Tarland to Corgarff, starting "early in the morning," and arriving at "past four." The route would be *via* Tarland, Migvie, and Boltinstone to Bellabeg, and thence up the Don. After destroying the Magazine they returned "eight miles for quarters"—evidently at Bellabeg. Here they arrived at "two o'clock in the morning." Reckoning their marching speed (which would be set by the infantry) at two miles per hour through the darkness and snow, they must have left Corgarff about 10 p.m. This would give something under six hours for staving the powder casks and finding the bayonets under the dunghill and the muskets strewn about among the heather—no mean achievement when we remember it would be dark.

*Monday, 3rd March; Tuesday 4th March; Wednesday 5th March.*—Allowing the same time for the return journey as for the march to Corgarff, these three days would be consumed in getting back to Aberdeen, which we are told they reached on the Wednesday.

Anxious to find whether the Government forces may have enjoyed the aid of moonlight during the earlier part of the evening, while engaged in destroying the depot, I applied to Mr O. F. T. Roberts, M.A., Lecturer in Astronomy and Meteorology in the University of Aberdeen. Mr Roberts has kindly supplied the following note:—"March 2nd (O.S.), 1746, is the equivalent of March 13th (N.S.), 1746: the change of the calendar taking place in 1752. The day was a Sunday. Calculating from the earliest Nautical Almanac (1767), I find that on that day the moon was 21 days old (about third quarter): that is, new moon was on February 20th (N.S.), 1746. Without going into the detailed calculation, it is seen that the moon was below the horizon throughout the exploit, including the return march to Bellabeg: rising at about 3 a.m. on March 14th (N.S.), 1746."

up and down the hills near it in different directions, and hid the bayonets under a dung-hill. However, we found all out, and brought away 367 firelocks, 370 bayonets. There were some more arms destroyed, which we could not carry. Ten thousand musket balls we threw into the river and amongst the heather, etc., etc., and it being impossible to convey away the powder for want of country horses, all gone to the hills with the country folks who had run away, being told by the rebels that we were to burn and destroy the whole country. We staved 32 double barrels of exceeding fine Spanish powder equal to 69 of our barrels, and threw it all into the river—and afterwards, for want of horses, were obliged to burn and destroy so many of the firelocks, that we brought but 131 to Aberdeen. We returned on Wednesday from such a country that a hundred men might beat a thousand from the hills above them—and had it snowed another night when we went there, it had been impossible to have returned. We were obliged to be two nights in the open fields—and sit on horseback all night. However, we happily executed what we were sent upon—and, thank God, returned safe, with only the loss of one horse. I do assure you the Clergy, who have everywhere in Scotland much distinguished themselves for our religion and happy constitution, behaved very kindly to us, were our guides and intelligencers every where—and three of them went quite up to the Castle of Corgarff with us, from whence, I forgot to tell you, we were obliged to return eight miles for quarters—and 'twas two o'clock in the morning before we arrived. Guess what a journey in such a country, in a dark night, snowing the whole time! . . . I hear now the Rebels are in great want of provisions. This Magazine is a great loss to the Rebels—it supplying them with ammunition in their marches thro' the Highlands, where carriages cannot go."

Some traces of the weapons which had been "conveyed up and down the hills" were perhaps found in 1825, in which year, "while removing some old buildings near the castle, there were discovered the bones of a man, and the barrels of two muskets."<sup>1</sup>

In Dougal Graham's quaint rhymed *History of the Rebellion*, published in September 1746, a short description is given of the capture of Corgarff Castle, with a notable improvement upon facts in making Lord Ancrum blow up the castle with the powder barrels instead of tamely staving them:—

"Now while the duke lay at Aberdeen,  
From England did his troops maintain,  
Brought in his stores ay by the sea,  
And laid no stress on that country,  
From thence the earl of Ancrum went,  
One hundred horse were with him sent,  
Major Morris with three hundred foot,  
Near to the head of Don they got,  
To take the Castle of Corgarf,  
But ere they came all were run aff,  
Wherein was a large magazine  
Of ammunition, and arms clean,  
Which did become the Earl's prey;  
But could not get it born away,

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<sup>1</sup> Laing, *Donean Tourist*, p. 23.

No horse he could get to employ,  
 Most of the spoil he did destroy,  
 'Bout thirty barrels of powder there,  
 Made soon that fort fly in the air,  
 And so returned to Aberdeen,  
 Long forty miles there were between."<sup>1</sup>

After the collapse of the insurrection, Corgarff Castle, whose strategic importance had been demonstrated during the campaign, was purchased by the Government, on the suggestion of General Blakeney, with a view to establishing there a base for the hunting down of rebels and "broken men" still at large, for the suppression of smuggling and illicit distilling, and generally for the establishment of law and order in a wild and unsettled district—which politically and socially was still in the Middle Ages. The idea of occupying Corgarff Castle, as well as the castle of Braemar, for this purpose was no new one: it had been mooted as far back as the campaign of 1689.

"I humbly crave pardon," writes the Master of Forbes from Aberdeen to the Earl of Melville on 27th June 1690, "for presumeing to press againe a thing I have so oft mentioned, the repairing the castle of Braemarr, which may be of good use, and without charge to the publiet, by obleidging the countrey thereabout, who brunt, to repair it, as also the castle of Curgarff, which is burnt of late. If orders be given, I shall sie it done. Thos castles nixt to Inverlochie are of the greatest importance of any garisones in the kingdome, for securing the peace of the Highlands, which, were they garisoned, ther would be litle or no use for the lower garisones of Kildrumie and Aboyne."<sup>2</sup>

A memorandum addressed from "Fort Augustus, 8th August 1747," by Lieut.-Colonel Watson<sup>3</sup> to Major-General Blakeney, sets forth with admirable clearness the general policy of establishing a cordon of such garrisons "for Covering that part of Inverness Shire lying South side of Murray firth, and the Shires of Murray, Bamff, Aberdeen, Mearns, and Angus against the Depredations of the Highlanders of Rannoch, Lochaber, and Glengary":

"The Continual Depredations Committed upon those Shires, from the above mentioned parts of the Highlands, seems to be a Scheme Artfully contrived, to Nurse and encourage the barbarity and idleness of these people, and may be called the principal spring of Rebellion, and all the irregularities they are so remarkable for, who being protected and encouraged in their theft, being themselves under the power of their Chiefs, who can and will give them up to

<sup>1</sup> *The Collected Writings of Dougal Graham*, ed. G. Macgregor, vol. i. pp. 148-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Leven and Melville Papers*, p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> Lieut.-Colonel (afterwards Major-General) David Watson was a very distinguished engineer officer, who was placed in charge of the whole of the road-making and other military works carried out in Scotland after the Forty-five. There is a good sketch of his career in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. One of his staff was young William Roy, afterwards the famous author of the *Military Antiquities of the Romans in Britain*.

Justice, should they at any time refuse to give all sort of obedience to their unlawfull commands, and this practice of Thieving is the sure and known Means of training up a number of people to the use of Arms, who on the least prospect of plunder are ready to join in any Rebellion or Tumult.

“In order to correct this abuse it will be difficult Matter to bridle those parts of the Highlands, where the Thieves reside, and at the same time by a proper chain of Posts effectually secure the heads of those Shires opposed to their depredations. . . .

“The heads of the Shires of Bamff, Aberdeen, Mearns, and Angus, nearly join about the Sources of the Rivers Don and Dee, and are bounded on the North by the River Spey, and on the South by a Ridge of Mountains, which bending round the heads of those Countries run northward and end at the head of Loch Inch about two Miles below Ruthven. If the heads of those Countries and the passes thro’ the Mountains were guarded, it would be scarce practicable to carry any Cattle from these Shires, for which Service ’tis proposed to Station one Compy. in Cargarff Castle near the head of the River Don, it belongs to Lord Bracco, is at present uninhabited, and would with a small charge be made a most convenient Barrack for a Company to Detatch as follows:—<sup>1</sup>

Inchrory . . . . .	1 Corpl. 6 Men.
Ribbalachlagan <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	5 Men.
Glenclunie . . . . .	4 Men.
Glenmuick . . . . .	1 Corpl. 4 Men.
Glenclova . . . . .	1 Corpl. 4 Men.
Dubrach <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	1 Sergt., 1 Corpl. 12 Men.
Tarland . . . . .	1 Sergt. „ 10 Men.

“By this Disposition the Thieves must cross two different Chains before they can carry their plunder into their own Country. The Company quartered at Cargarff and the two Companys posted at Ruthven and Taybridge, who can’t miss being alarmed by the Country People, should they chance to pass the first chain formed by the Company at Cargarff.”<sup>4</sup>

The radical defect in the scheme thus outlined is evidently the enormous area of country which it was proposed to control from the single centre at Corgarff. This difficulty was evidently soon realised, for in the scheme actually carried out (see Map, fig. 6) two garrisons were established, one at Braemar Castle and the other at Corgarff Castle: the former with

<sup>1</sup> See Map, fig. 6.

<sup>2</sup> “Ribbalachlagan on the head of the River Garin nigh Loch-builg, a Central Post betwixt the Heads of Dee and Don”—Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. ii. p. 506. The name seems now to be unknown. The post established there is thus described in a report by the captain of Braemar Castle, 3rd June 1750: “The place where the party stays is a Barn belonging to the Laird of Invercald, the Men are pretty well accomodated as to Lodging and firing, but at present they Can get little or Nothing but Meal in the Country, as the Mutton will not be in season this Month”—*ibid.*, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> “Dubrach in the head of Braemarr which is the principal out Station and Central to ye whole,” *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 506. Dubhrach is on the south bank of the Dee, near the junction of the Geldie. Its garrison is thus described in Captain Edhouse’s report of 3rd June 1750: “The Men are in a Barn, and are pretty well accomodated having plenty of Blanketts from the County People besides those they Carried from home”—*ibid.*, p. 543.

<sup>4</sup> Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 493-4.



Officer Commanding, Ensign Robert Rutherford of General Pulteney's Regiment, dated 4th June 1750, as follows:—<sup>1</sup>

“ Out Posts.	Sergt.	Corpl.	Men.
Inchrory . . . . .	1	—	8
Braes of Abernethy . . . . .	„	1	5
Moving patrolle . . . . .	„	1	6
	1	2	19
Remaining in the Barracks With me . . . . .	1	1	21
Total.—	2	3	40”

Naturally, it took some time to get this system organised into working order, particularly as to both castles extensive repairs and alterations had to be made to fit them for barrack purposes.

Colonel Watson's memorandum, previously quoted, proposing a garrison at Corgarff, is dated 8th August 1747. About this time, or shortly before, the actual occupation of the castle by the Government forces seems to have taken place, as appears from a letter of Colonel Watson, dated from Edinburgh 18th June of this year, ordering the castle to be garrisoned by a sergeant, a corporal, and eight men.<sup>2</sup> The next stage in the proceedings is revealed by a note in the *Aberdeen Journal* of 5th April 1748: “We hear Col. Watson, who came lately to Town, is going to Curgarff, in order to give Directions for repairing the Castle there, for which Purpose Workmen have been sent from this Place to estimate the Charge.”<sup>3</sup> The reports from the captains in charge of the different posts in the Highlands commence on 11th July 1749, and in those from Braemar Castle no mention of the subordinate station at Corgarff occurs until 23rd October, when we get the first indication of the presence of troops at the Donside fortress: “Lieut. Moody at Corgarf has taken up four Highlanders, and is to send them to aberdeen to Morrow.”<sup>4</sup> Thereafter the captain at Braemar submits reports for both stations until, on 4th June 1750, we have the first independent report by Ensign Rutherford from Corgarff, of which the parade state has already been quoted.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. ii. p. 544. “The parties at Inchrory and the Braes of Abernethy,” Ensign Rutherford tells us, “are Quarter'd tolerably well in Country Hutts, are supply'd with Oat Meal from the Country, the Country people supply them also with other provisions, which Consists of Mutton Milk and Eggs at Reasonable Rates, but they have no firing except what they gather from the Hills.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> *Aberdeen Journal*, No. 14 (29th March–5th April 1748), p. 4. This is the year inscribed on the third-floor fireplace—see *supra*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Allardyce, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 527. Lieut. Moody is included in the strength of the garrison in the earlier report—*ibid.*, p. 514.

<sup>5</sup> See *supra*. The report also contains an interesting statement about the “Glens and Communications betwixt the several Outposts,” and an account of the doings of the Moving Patrol.

As to the actual work carried out on the castle at this time we have no documentary evidence. We can only infer from the architectural features of the building as we see it to-day, and from the survey (see *infra*, Additional Note) made by the Government officers when they took the building in hand. One previous effort to detail the work carried out in 1748 may be quoted.

“It is not difficult even now to make out the alterations that were then made upon it. The parapet and all the corbels on which the parapet rested, except the two that still remain over the door, were removed; two plain gables were then built on the tower, with ordinary eighteenth-century chimney-tops; the common sloping roof that now exists put on from gable to gable to form an attic or garret storey; the small windows on the south side of the tower abolished and the seven existing eighteenth-century windows slapped out in their stead; the small, unshapely staircase built on to the wall at the south-east corner to give access to the garret floor; the one storey addition of a single room, with eighteenth-century chimney, added at each end; and the whole surrounded with the loopholed curtain, with salients on each side of its four fronts to defend the flanks—all as they now exist.”<sup>1</sup>

My own close study of the castle has convinced me that the above cannot be accepted as an accurate statement of the work carried out upon it in 1748. In the first place there is no likelihood that the two corbels still remaining over the door are the survivors of a projecting parapet which originally ran round the tower. This view was first propounded by Messrs MacGibbon and Ross,<sup>2</sup> but it is unsupported by any structural evidence. Had there been such an open parapet, the stubs of the other corbels would still be visible all round the wall-head where they were cut away: or, if they had been withdrawn entirely, indications of disturbance in the masonry would still be recognisable. Moreover, what motive could exist for sparing the two that still survive? As it is, the fact that these occur just above the door, together with the significantly raked-back surface of the wall between them, and the existence of a roof-raggle on the edge of the cap-house adjoining, make it perfectly clear that we have to deal with a relic of the kind of defensive arrangement which the German archæologists expressively call a *pechnase*—*i.e.* an oversailing corbelled machicolation, placed above the doorway for the purpose of pouring down quicklime, pitch, or missiles upon assailants seeking to force an entry. This type of localised overhead defence is very frequently found in castles of the sixteenth century, at the time when the open parapet was going out of fashion and the gabled roof of high pitch was taking its place. Other examples might easily be multiplied: good instances may be seen at Gylen Castle,

<sup>1</sup> *Corygarff Castle: The Scene of the Burning of the House of Towie*, by A. E. Smith (printed for private circulation, 1901), pp. 13-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 67.

Kerrera; at Blairfindy Castle, Banffshire (dated 1586); at Craiggaffie Tower, Wigtown (dated 1570); and at Loch Ranza Castle, Arran.

Nor do I believe that the two gables of the tower as now seen are so recent as 1748. There is no indication whatever of reconstruction in the masonry of either gable wall: they both seem clearly to be of one build from the basement upwards. Also the pitch of the gables seems too high for eighteenth-century work. The two chimneys, or at all events their copings, are undoubtedly of the eighteenth century: they are of identical pattern with the chimneys on the pavilions. Likely enough the flat skews of the gables also date from this period, although they might equally well have been put on, in place of original crow-steps, when the tower was repaired after its destruction in 1689. Another fact which strongly points to the gables being older than 1748 is the fact that the cap-house, whose purpose is to serve the garret between these gables, is undoubtedly older than 1748—in spite of the opinion above quoted. This is perfectly clear from a number of quite distinct pieces of evidence. To begin with, the narrow loops which lit the original newel stair, removed during the 1748 alterations, still survive, though built up, in the wall: the uppermost of these built-up loopholes (clearly visible in fig. 3) is in the cap-house, and above it on two sides, south and east, are found unaltered original windows—one blocked and the other showing a sixteenth-century chamfer—which lit the room formed under the cap-house roof, over the stairhead. Again, on the west side of the cap-house, as already stated, is seen the roof-raggle of the machicolation chamber, clearly showing the cap-house to be contemporary with the latter, which is an unmistakably original feature of the tower. It is thus abundantly demonstrated that the tower never had an open parapet, that the two corbels on the south side are merely relics of a local machicolation defending the door, and that the roof was always a high-pitched one between gables, forming a garret reached by the cap-house over the newel stair at the south-east corner. The actual flat-skewed gable now existing on the cap-house is of too low a pitch for Scottish baronial work: it may date either from the reconstruction after 1689, or from 1748. It should be noted that while the gables of the tower have curved projecting spur-stones, those of the two wings, which are undoubtedly of the eighteenth century, have not; a circumstance which distinctly suggests that the tower gables, flat skews and all, are older. The castle was not a ruin when the Government took it over: it was a habitable building, and while it may very probably have been deemed necessary to renew the roof, there is no evidence that it was also requisite to rebuild the cap-house and the two gables. My own view is that all these wall-head features, except the chimney copes,

may very probably date from the reconstruction carried out by the Earl of Mar after 1689.

Some years ago, Mr James S. Richardson, F.S.A.Scot., H.M. Inspector of Ancient Monuments in Scotland, told me that there existed in the British Museum a sheet of plans made by the Government for the reconstruction of Braemar Castle when they took it over after the "Forty-five." I asked Dr J. M. Bulloch to trace them for me, which he undertook to do with his usual ready courtesy. The gratifying result was the discovery, not only of two sheets of plans for Braemar Castle, but also of a similar sheet for the castle of Corgarff. The papers are preserved among the Additional Manuscripts,<sup>1</sup> and seem to have been collected by Lieut-General William Skinner, R.E., who died in 1780. Through the courtesy of the British Museum authorities I am privileged to reproduce one of the Braemar sheets and the Corgarff sheet (see figs. 7 and 8).

On comparing the eighteenth-century drawings with my own survey (fig. 1), it will be seen that important divergencies exist between them. Either the arrangements indicated in the old plans were departed from, or alterations have subsequently been made. In some cases the plan omits original details that still survive. In the basement of the tower two original loopholes with splayed ingoings are shown on the north side, one lighting each cellar. I pointed out in my description that the present doors here are clearly hacked out, and that evidence of the old loophole-ingoings still remains. The old plan shows neither the window hacked through the south wall of the west cellar, nor the small old loop lighting the stair, and also omits the aumbry at the stairfoot. On the first floor, in the west room, only one window is shown on the south side, and none on the north: the two cupboards and aumbry in the west wall are also omitted. The second window on the south side may have been an afterthought, but as it is of the same dimensions as all the others on the south front, it is more probably contemporary, the scheme having been changed in order to secure a symmetrical elevation such as delighted the heart of an eighteenth-century designer. Against the partition wall in this room two wooden enclosures are shown. On the second floor the remains of the garderobe recess in the north wall, and the aumbry to the east, do not appear. On the third floor we find no cupboard in the west wall and no aumbries in the north

<sup>1</sup> Braemar—Add. MSS. 33,231, K1 and 2; Corgarff, Add. MSS. 33,231, K3. The two sheets of plans of Braemar are dated respectively 1750 and 1753, but show no change in the arrangements of the building. The Corgarff sheet has no date. On the Braemar sheets is endorsed "Handed over to Lt. Monier Skinner, R.E., by his father in 1872," and "in 1873" respectively. The Corgarff sheet has the same endorsement with date 1872. All three sheets of plans are drawn to a scale of 10 feet=1 inch.

wall, while the two blocked window recesses, north and east, are also not in evidence. In the garret plan two windows are shown on the north side and two in the south: from the elevation it seems that these must be meant to represent the skylights. All the fireplaces are shown with straight instead of splayed ingoings. The elevation, taken from the south, shows no porch but only an open platform at the stairhead in front of the main door. Only one window is shown on

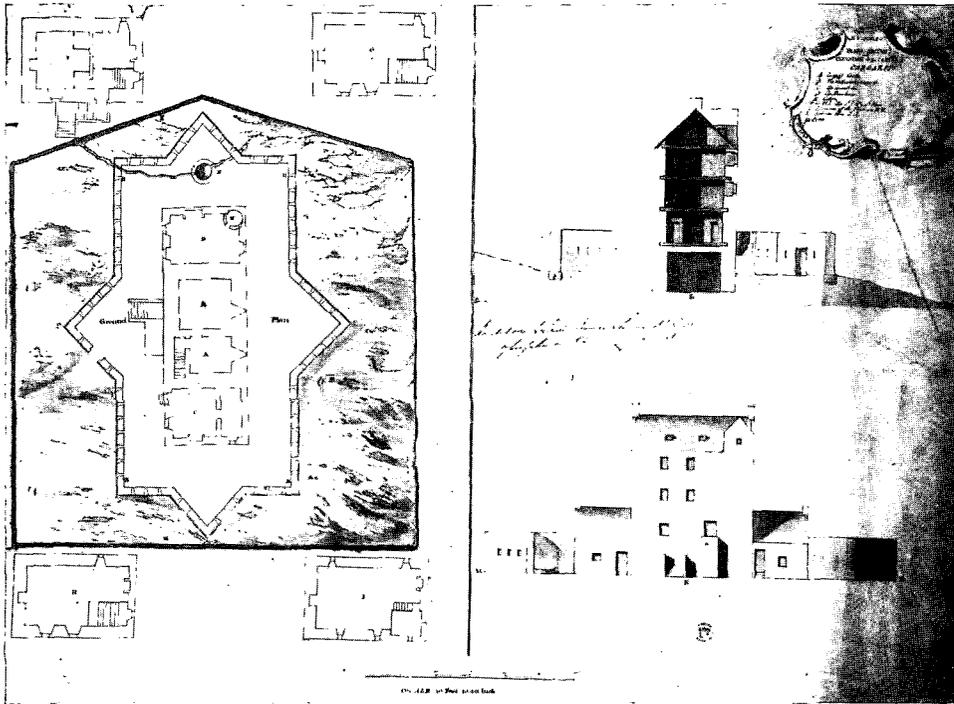


Fig. 7. Corgarff Castle: measured drawings made after its reconstruction in 1748.

the first floor, as in the plan. The cap-house is drawn with a gable of higher pitch than at present, and both in the plan and elevation its topmost window is shown open; the blocking which now fills this window (as stated already, p. 51) is clearly more recent than that of the series of narrow loops below, which are not shown in the elevation. Two skylights are indicated in the roof. The chimneys both of the tower and the pavilion are shown with a sloped coping of the old Scottish style, instead of the cornice and blocking course which now exist. The section through the tower, looking east, shows the wooden

chambers in the west room on the first floor, but otherwise reveals no features of importance.

The east pavilion is shown precisely in its present state, but in the west pavilion no partitions are found, while in its north-west angle is placed an oven, 4 feet 6 inches in diameter. This pavilion is styled "The Brew house," while the other is the "The Guard room." The

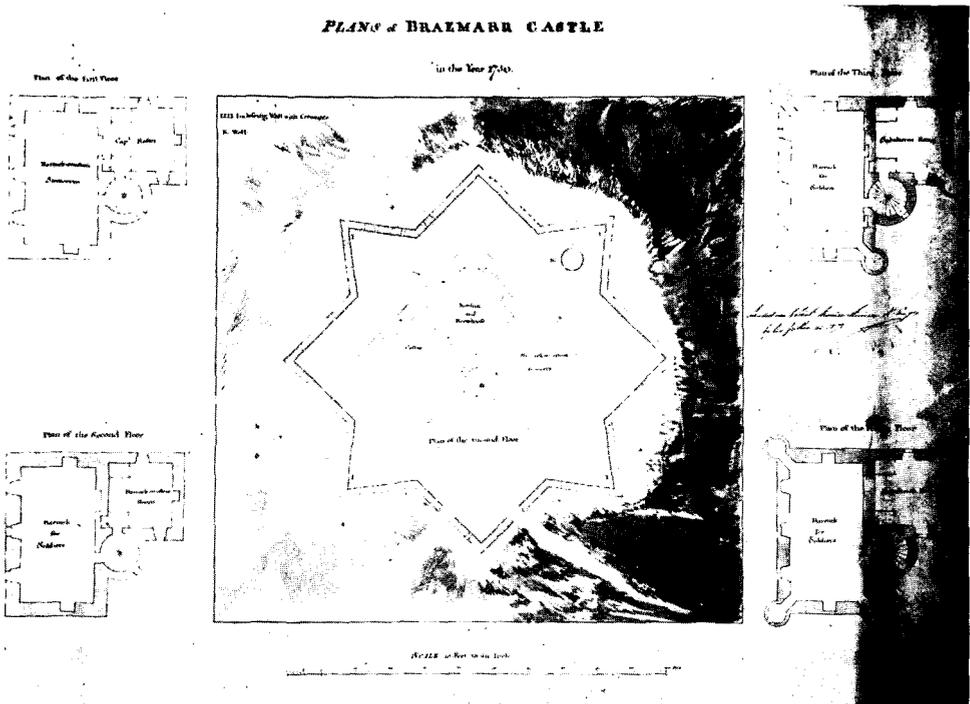


Fig. 8. Braemar Castle: plans made in 1750, after its reconstruction.

door of this pavilion is shown at a slightly higher level, with two steps up. The inner closet in this wing would no doubt be the lock-up.

The curtain wall, with its salients, loopholes, door and sloped coping is drawn precisely as it now exists. In the gorge of the west salient is shown the "Cistern,"<sup>1</sup> 5 feet in diameter, its mouth surrounded by a coping 1 foot thick, and shown about 1 foot high on the elevation. The course of the stream which served the cistern is also shown.

One other small piece of evidence bearing on the structural history

<sup>1</sup> In the Braemar plans the position of the "Well" in the northern salient is shown.

of the castle may here be noted. It occurs in a report submitted on 11th March 1750, by Captain Esme Clarke, the officer in charge at Braemar Castle, who had under him Lieut. Leslie at Corgarff. The report states that Captain Clarke at Braemar has given effect to instructions received that the Barrack-master should have a room for himself and his stores. "Lieut. Leslie informs me," continues Clarke, "there is a small room for the Barrack Master of that garrison, Built by one Misset, but by whose Order he can't tell."<sup>1</sup> The British Museum surveys of Braemar Castle show no less than three rooms under the Barrack-master, namely, the cellar in the basement of the wing ("Barrack-master's Granary"), the main room on the first floor (Barrack-master's Store-room"), and the room in the wing on the floor above (Barrack-master's Room); but no room is so apportioned at Corgarff. From the fact that the Barrack-master's room at Corgarff is referred to as recently built, it was doubtless one of the pavilions. Who "Misset" was I do not know. Is the name a mistake for Bisset?

The regular series of reports submitted by the officer in charge of Corgarff Castle make interesting reading, and bring the tense atmosphere of the countryside, in the years that followed the Forty-Five, vividly before our minds. One report may be given as an example.<sup>2</sup>

*"7th Subaltern's Command.*

Ensign Rutherford of Genl. Pulteney's Regmt.  
Station: Corgarff Barrack.  
Report, Oct. 12, 1750. Corgarff.

One of the Soldiers of this Garrison had his fingers Cut very desperately by a fellow in the Country on Wednesday last, the soldier says it was because he would not Drink the pretender's health, but the fellow denies that, however I sent a party, and had him apprehended at night, and he was sent to Justice of peace who has order'd him to find Bail to stand his trial on Monday next.

(Sign'd) Ro. RUTHERFORD."

On 13th April 1754 Major-General Humphrey Bland, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Scotland, writes exultantly to the Secretary of State, Lord Holderness: "Brae Mar and Corgarff were taken from Mr Farqerson of Invercauld, where we now have two small barracks erected, the good effects of which is now plainly felt by bringing in the people of that barbarous and mountainous country into a peaceable and orderly state, and they are now become honest and industrious and live with great friendship and amity with His Majesty's troops quartered there."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. ii. p. 531.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 579.

<sup>3</sup> "Scotland: Letters and Papers," Public Record Office, 2nd series, bundle 44, No. 3—quoted in *Aberdeen Journal Notes and Queries*, vol. iv. pp. 231-2. The Commander-in-Chief was of course misinformed in regard to Corgarff, which was leased from the laird of Skellater. The same letter tells us that Colonel Watson had arranged the leases.

Although the country was rapidly pacified so far as the embers of revolt were concerned, smuggling still flourished apace, and in consequence a military force was maintained in the castle until so late as 1831. In the *New Statistical Account* it is stated that "from 1827 to 1831 it was garrisoned by a captain, subaltern, and 56 men, to support the civil authorities in the suppression of smuggling."<sup>1</sup> I can vouch for the case of old crofter, who in 1906 recollected, when a very small boy, having assisted his father in carrying to the castle sundry kegs which he had sold to the redcoats—"and the cream o' the joke," concluded the veteran, "was that every drap o' the whisky was contraband!"

Long before its abandonment, however, the need for a garrison in the castle, even to control the smuggling, had departed. In the words of the Rev. Charles Cordiner, writing in 1795, Corgarff

"is but an old castellated house which, when fitted up with some additional buildings, was constituted into a kind of fortress, and garrisoned by government about half a century ago; there were several such, established on the same footing, and officers appointed to reside in them, to enforce political regulations in these remote districts, where they had been formerly but partially attended to; and to secure to individuals the possession of property, while surrounded with numbers long unaccustomed to the restraints of law, and irritated by opposing interests. They are now altogether superfluous in these views, the discipline of civil society being thoroughly understood and cheerfully followed in the most inland regions of every county. These buildings seem only now destined to serve the purpose of affording good accommodation to those gentlemen who, in the end of Summer, and in Autumn, delight to wander o'er the highest hills to enjoy the recreations of the field—the pastime of fowling. The surrounding mountains abounding with cover, and the hills of heath with game, render *Corgarf* an eligible residence for sportsmen during the hunting season: and it is for that purpose often occupied accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the castle had again reverted to its original condition as a hunting-lodge. From Cordiner's language, coupled with the statement in the *New Statistical Account*, already quoted, that between 1825 and 1831 the castle was garrisoned to restrain smuggling, it may perhaps be inferred that there had been an interruption in the military occupation of the building, and that some recrudescence of smuggling had led to its renewal. This view is confirmed by the *Old Statistical Account* (1794), wherein it is stated that the castle "was purchased by Government in 1746, from Mr Forbes of Skellater, and for several years thereafter, 15 or 20 men were stationed in it; for some years

<sup>1</sup> *New Statistical Account*, vol. xii. p. 544. At page 549 an interesting account is given of the extent to which smuggling formerly prevailed.

<sup>2</sup> Cordiner, *Remarkable Ruins and Romantic Prospects of North Britain*, vol. i., article "Corgarf Castle."

past the garrison has consisted of two or three invalids."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Charles Dawson, in his notes contributed in 1797 to the poem *Don*, after describing the Government occupation after the Forty-five, states definitely that "it has been employed as a barrack ever since, and soldiers kept in it to suppress any tumult that might happen in that part of the country." To Dawson's quaint commentary we are indebted also for some other interesting particulars about the military occupation of the castle. The name of Cock Bridge—"which is the only English name I know of in Cargarff"—he thus explains:

"The people who kept the Public-house at the end of the bridge, had for their sign a Red Cock painted and hung up, which made the soldiers coming that way inquire for the Cock-bridge, which name it retains to this day. . . . The church of Lineorn [now Loinorne] is part of the parish of Strathdon, and the minister has ten pounds paid him by government for preaching, etc., to the soldiers of the Castle who attend there.<sup>2</sup> Near this is Corryhoul, where there has been a chapel in the time of Popery, and its burial-ground is still used for burying many of the people in Cargarff; and all the soldiers who die in the Castle are interred there, with all the ceremonies that are used in the army. But its appearance is very odd like, as there is no dyke about the graves, and from its lying remote from any house, in an open field."<sup>3</sup>

In *Bentley's Miscellany* for the year 1842 appeared two quaintly written articles by Henry Curling, entitled respectively "A Detachment in the Highlands—Corgarff Castle," and "Ensign Marvel's First Detachment at Corgarff, and what he saw there."<sup>4</sup> The tale purports to be imaginary, and in the description of the castle and its surroundings there are sundry inaccuracies and a prevalent note of exaggeration. But the general picture of life in the lonely garrison during midwinter is singularly vivid and convincing, and various points in the description and narrative bear the unmistakable hall-mark of truth. The author was a regular army officer, and must have based his "yarns" upon tales heard from some brother-officer who had been on duty at Corgarff.

After the military quitted the castle it was for a time occupied by farm labourers: in 1911 it was still inhabited by two picturesque old women.

A word or two may be added about the great military road from

<sup>1</sup> *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. xiii. p. 182. It is noteworthy that the garrison was withdrawn from Braemar Castle in 1797 (A. Laing, *Caledonian Itinerary*, vol. i. p. 58). Cordiner in his article upon Braemar Castle describes it as in use, like Corgarff Castle, as a shooting-box; but his illustration shows the main part of the building in a roofless condition. According to Laing (*ut supra*), writing in 1819, the castle "is now uninhabited."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Laing, *Donean Tourist*, p. 25: "On the northern verge of the Don is the supplementary church of Lynn Oarn, or bear-yard, erected for a chaplain while the soldiers occupied the garrison, but owing to the longitude of the parish of Strathdon, they are proposing to form it into a separate parish."

<sup>3</sup> *Don, a Poem*, with Notes by Charles Dawson, schoolmaster of Kemnay, reprinted 1905, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Bentley's Miscellany*, vol. xi. pp. 660-8, and vol. xii. pp. 85-93.

Braemar Castle to Corgarff Castle, and hence across the Lecht to Tomintoul—the road (see Map, fig. 6) which played so important a part in the opening up and pacification of the West Aberdeenshire Highlands. All military roads in northern Scotland are popularly, and even on the Ordnance Maps, assigned to Marshal Wade, whose reputation as a road-maker has indeed become almost legendary: but the great north road across the Dee and Don valleys was not commenced until after Wade's death.<sup>1</sup> The section of it between Blairgowrie and Braemar, over the Cairnwell, was built in 1749-50. That between Braemar and Corgarff dates from the summer of 1753.<sup>2</sup> Crossing the Dee by the handsome military bridge at Invercauld, it turns towards the north opposite Balmoral, crosses the Gairn by another military bridge at Gairnshiel, and on the watershed reaches a height of 1805 feet between Carn a' Bhacain and Scraulac. This road is still a well-known route, but the present descent on Donside at Tornahaish is modern, the old military road holding north-westward by Carn Leac Saighdeir to Corgarff. This portion is now used only as a shepherd's track, but evidence of its former importance survives in three small military bridges crossing tributaries of the Don.<sup>3</sup> The old bridge, by which the road crossed the Don before the modern turnpike road was made along the river to this point in 1826,<sup>4</sup> is shown in the foreground in Cordiner's view of Corgarff Castle (fig. 9):<sup>5</sup> it had evidently been a typical high-backed, one-arched bridge of the military type, just like that still extant at Gairnshiel.

From Bridge-end of Allargue the military highway is still in use as the famous—and fearsome—Lecht Road, which, mounting the watershed to a height of 2114 feet between *Sgor Damh* and *Little Corr Riabhach*, descends by Glenconglas to Tomintoul in Strathaven. This

<sup>1</sup> For the whole subject, Mr G. M. Fraser's admirable work on *The Old Deeside Road* should be consulted. The modest title of this work conceals what is really its chief value—the exhaustive and accurate study of the cross-country routes, over the Mounth and northward, which, of course, were of far greater importance in ancient times than the roads ascending the valleys.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-10, 212-3. See also *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, vol. vi. p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Laing, *Donean Tourist*, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Remarkable Ruins and Romantic Prospects of North Britain*, 1795, vol. i. The old bridge is described by Dawson (*Don*, ed. 1903, p. 4.) who says: "A little below the Castle is a stone bridge of one arch, over Don, on the road that leads from Edinburgh to Fort William, etc.; and another one on a small rivulet that falls into the Don, a little below the bridge called Cock Bridge. . . . When the above road was made, the King built these two bridges, and a mason in Edinburgh has an allowance from government to uphold them, for the behoof of the soldiers that are marching from the northern forts to or from Edinburgh." Cf. *Old Statistical Account*, vol. xiii. p. 185: "There are in the parish two stone bridges on Don, the one, half an English mile to the westward of the church [Pooldhulie Bridge is meant], the other at the Castle of Corgarff, on the King's road from Edinburgh to Fort George."

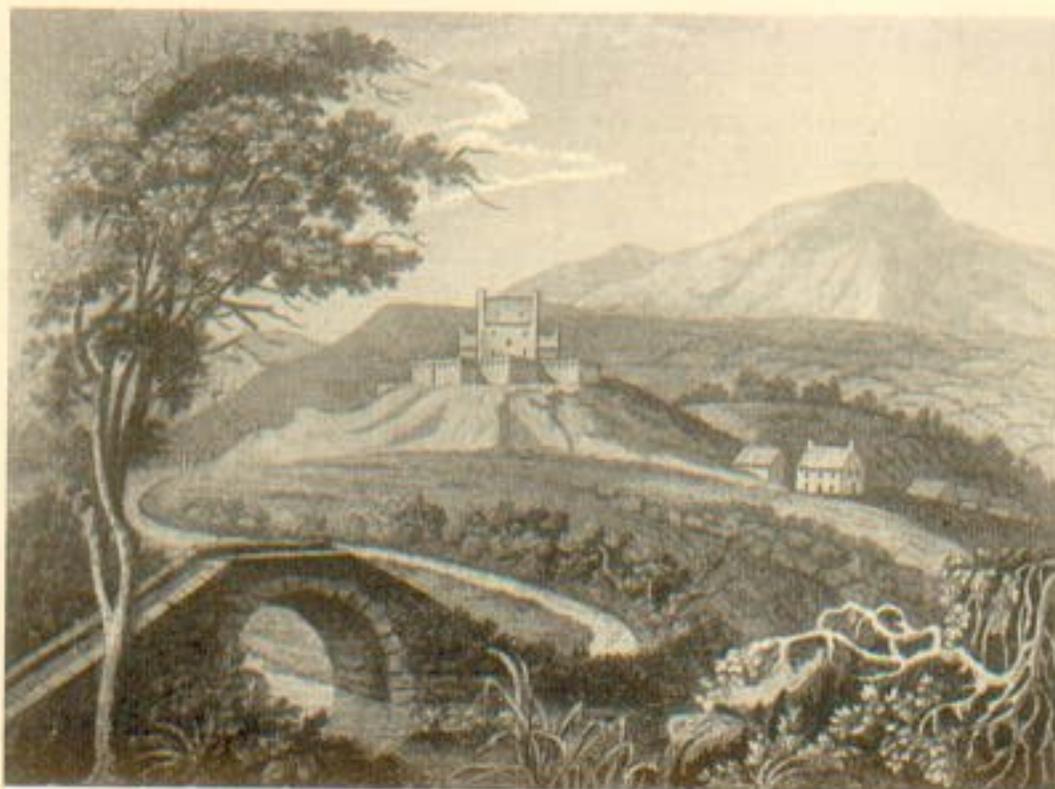


Fig. 9. Corgarff Castle: view from the N. in 1795.



Fig. 10. The Well of the Lecht.

section of the road is accurately dated to 1754 by the Well of the Lecht (fig. 10), with its inscription recording that Lord Charles Hay was Colonel of the roadmen from here to the Spey at Grantown.

Although we have thus seen that the great high-road of which Corgarff Castle was the Donside sentinel dated from the period after the Forty-five, the Hanoverian engineers were merely following old cross-country routes that had doubtless been in use for long ages before. The road over the Lecht, for example, is succinctly described as a then well-recognised passage by Ensign Rutherford in his report from Corgarff Castle, dated 4th June 1750.<sup>1</sup> And four centuries earlier we find Robert II. using precisely the same route on his northward progress, as evidenced by charters granted at the Spital of Glenshee and at Kindrochit Castle, and hunting expenses incurred in Glenconglas.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE EDMO O' GORDOUN TRAGEDY.

In November 1571, Corgarff Castle became the scene of the terrible outrage so graphically and beautifully commemorated in the pathetic ballad of Edom o' Gordoun—when Margaret Campbell or Forbes, wife of the laird of Towie, was burned to death with her family and servants by a party of Gordons under one Captain Kerr. It has been often stated that the ghastly deed was perpetrated at Towie Castle, 15 miles further down the Don valley: but a critical examination of the evidence makes it beyond dispute that the castle burned under such tragic circumstances was not Towie but Corgarff. The whole question was very fully and ably discussed in 1901 by the late Mr Alexander Elmslie Smith, who published his conclusions in a brochure printed for private circulation. Mr Elmslie Smith's arguments are so cogently marshalled that it would be presumption to set them forth in language other than his own. For this reason, and because his little work is now become scarce and not readily accessible, I make no apology for reproducing *in extenso* the central portion of his thesis.<sup>3</sup>

“The whole district called Corgarff formed part of the Earldom of Mar, but in the fifteenth century the Erskines were illegally dispossessed by the Crown both of the title and of the estates. Part of the lands of the earldom in the county of Aberdeen were by successive charters, from 1507 onwards, given to the Lords Elphinstone, and it was not till the year 1635 that, after proceedings both in Parliament and in the Court of Session,<sup>4</sup> the Earl of Mar succeeded in

<sup>1</sup> Allardyce, *Jacobite Papers*, vol. ii. p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> See my paper on “The Royal Castle of Kindrochit in Mar,” in *Proceedings*, vol. lvii. pp. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> *Corgarff Castle: The Scene of the Burning of the House of Towie*, pp. 1-9. I have verified the references and quotations, and made one or two minor corrections and amplifications.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Earldom of Mar*, by Lord Crawford and Balcarres, specially vol. i. pp. 331-457.

regaining from Lord Elphinstone and his vassals actual possession of the lands of the earldom, including the lands of Corgarff.

"In the meantime, and before the year 1561, Lord Elphinstone had conveyed the lands of Corgarff to John Forbes of Towie, and in this year Mr Forbes, according to a form of family settlement that then prevailed, resigned his whole lands to his son and heir Alexander, under reservation of his own life-rent.<sup>1</sup>

"By this device John continued laird of Towie and Alexander became fiar thereof.

"The Towie property in Corgarff is described in the verdict at an inquest for fixing the terce falling to Alexander's widow, held by the Sheriff of Aberdeen on the 13th of January 1596, after the death both of John and Alexander.

"The jury found 'that the late Alexander Forbes fiar of Towie died last vest and seized as of fee in' among other lands, 'all and whole the lands of Easter Corriehoul and the portion of the forest of Corgarff bounding and adjacent to the foresaid lands of Easter Corriehoul with the pertinents. As also in the lands called Aulgarff; as also in all and singular the westernmost lands of the foresaid lands of Corriehoul and the portion of the forest of Corgarff bounding the said lands of Wester Corriehoul, with the pertinents of the same lying in the Barony of Kildrummy and Sheriffdom aforesaid.'<sup>2</sup> The castle was not liable for widow's terce, and therefore not mentioned in the verdict.

"The lands of Corriehoul are well known.

"Although the district as a whole was called Corgarff, the 'lands of Corriehoul' were then, as now, by far the most important. Not only did Corriehoul embrace almost all the then cultivated land, it was also the seat of the local ecclesiastical settlement. The church of Corriehoul was dedicated to St Machar; the churchyard in which the church stood is the burying ground of Corgarff to the present day;<sup>3</sup> and the 'Machar Well' is still of repute, and is duly marked in the Ordnance Survey.

"The lands called Aulgarff—that is, Altgarff—include those now called Castletoun, on which the Castle stands. They were so called from the burn of that name (*Alt-garbh*, the rough burn) that runs through them.<sup>4</sup> The stream

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iv. p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> Sheriff Court Records, 13th January 1596. (See *Records of the Sheriff Court of Aberdeenshire*, ed. D. Littlejohn, vol. i. p. 345.—W. D. S.)

<sup>3</sup> (For St Mochriecha or St Machar and his labours in what is now Mar, see my *Origins of Christianity in Aberdeenshire*, pp. 16-8. The establishment of a church by a primitive missionary postulates, of course, a local resident population to which he could minister. Yet it must be remarked that relics of prehistoric and protohistoric occupation are almost non-existent in the remote upland district of Corgarff. Lower down the valley they become extremely numerous; the earth-houses of Strathdon and Kildrummy are deservedly famous, and point to a large and well-settled population in the Early Iron Age. But in Corgarff, at the head of the valley, the only relic of prehistoric times of which I know is the fragment of a bronze spear-head now preserved in the Banff Museum. The fragment, which measures  $4\frac{2}{7}$  inches in length, is the point of a typical lanceolate Bronze Age spear-head. At the broken end the usual hollow interior is exposed. From the bent condition of the blade near the fracture, it may be conjectured that the spear had been thrust into something and then snapped off. The label attached to the specimen is as follows:—"Point of a bronze spear found in a peat bog in Corgarff, Strathdon, 1865, presented by Mr Walker, Castle Newe." No other information is available. I am indebted to the courtesy of the Curator of the Banff Museum, through Sheriff J. W. More, for kindly allowing me to inspect and handle this interesting relic.—W. D. S.)

<sup>4</sup> (As authority for this, Mr Elmslie Smith quotes J. Macdonald's *Place-Names in West Aberdeenshire*, but I have been unable to find any reference to the name in this work.—W. D. S.)

is still called indifferently the Burn of Corgarff, the Burn of Castletoun, and the Burn of the Cock—so called from the figure of a muir-cock on the signboard of the little hostelry that of old stood at the bridge where the military road to Tomintoul crosses the burn. In the Ordnance Survey maps this burn is, from an excess of zeal for Gaelic terminology, named *Alt a' Choilich*—the burn of the muir cock—but this name does not appear in any other map that I have seen.

“It was thus absolutely correct, as was done in 1571, to speak of the Castle of Corgarff as the ‘house of Towie,’ in the sense that it belonged to the laird of Towie; and in speaking of it as a local residence of the proprietor of Corriehoul, it was also accurate to call it the ‘place of Corriehoul.’

“To come now to the outrage itself, which took place in the year 1571.

“Queen Mary had escaped from Lochleven, and was now a prisoner in England, but still the feuds between the rival factions went on. Under the year 1571 the Chronicle of Fortingall records ‘gret weris that yer in the north land betuyxt Gordonis and Forbesis and the Forbesis put til the warst and mony slayn of them and thownis vastitht and brynt.’<sup>1</sup>

“Adam Gordon of Auchindoun, brother of the Earl of Huntly, was a leader in the Queen’s cause, and the Forbeses were on the other side.

“The Master of Forbes and his allies advanced to Aberdeen, where the Gordons lay. On 20th November 1571, the rival clans engaged at the Craibstane, at the west of the city, in deadly conflict, ‘cruellie fochtin be the space of ane hour.’<sup>2</sup>

“The following narrative is taken from Bannatyne’s *Journal* :—

‘Adam of Gordoun a little befoir had not only defait the Forbessis, as befoir is said, bot also went to the hous of Touy, whilk he brunt and 24 persounes in the same, neuer one escaping but one woman that come through the cornes and hather whilk was cassin to the hous sydis, whairby thei wer smored. This was done vnder assuurance; for the lard of Toweyis wyfe, being sister to the lady Crawford and also died within the hous, send a boy to the laird in tyme of the trewis (which was for the space of xij houris) to sie on what conditiones thai suld rander the hous. In the meintyme Adam Gordounis men laid the cornes and tymbber and hather about the hous, and set all on fyre.’<sup>3</sup>

“Such is the narrative of a contemporary annalist who, in speaking as a person having no local knowledge, speaks of ‘the hous of Touy’—a description that as already shown, applied without violence to the laird of Towie’s house in Corgarff.

“There is, however, another contemporary annalist whose narrative is, beyond all question, conclusive.

“Mr Matthew Lumsden of Tillycairn,<sup>4</sup> in the parish of Cluny, was of the Forbes kith and kin, and suffered along with them at the hands of the Gordons. The outrage took place in 1571; and in the year 1573 Lord Forbes, for redress and protection to himself and his kin, took proceedings against the Gordons before the Lords of Council, with the result following :—

“27th June 1573. Before the Lords of Council.

‘Anent our Souerane Lordis Lettres purchest at the instance of Wiliame lord Forbes and Johnne maister of Forbes for thame selffis, thair kyn, freindis, and dependaris’ against George, Earl of Huntly, Sheriff Principal of Aberdeen, and Adam Gordon of Auchindoun—‘the Lordis of Council hes exemit and exemis’ among others ‘Johnne Forbes of Tollies’ (Towie) and ‘Maister Matho

<sup>1</sup> “Chronicle of Fortingall” in *The Black Book of Taymouth*, ed. C. Innes, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Diurnall of Occurrents in Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials of Transactions in Scotland*, by Richard Bannatyne, ed. R. Pitcairn, p. 212. Bannatyne was secretary to John Knox.

<sup>4</sup> (For Tillycairn Castle, see my paper in *Proceedings*, vol. lv. pp. 139-42.—W. D. S.)

Lumsden of Tullicarne' 'fra the said schiref principale of the said schirefdome of Abirdene his deputtis office of iurisdiction.'<sup>1</sup>

"In the year 1580 Mr Lumsden wrote a *Genealogy of the Family of Forbes*, which was edited by Mr W. Forbes about the year 1667, and then by him brought down to date. It is not possible that Mr Lumsden could have written in ignorance, and in this very family history Mr Lumsden twice states in explicit terms that it was in the 'Castell of Corgaffe' that the son of John Forbes by his first wife and the lady—Margaret Campbell—and her family were 'unmercifullie murdered.'<sup>2</sup>

"The only suggestion made against the authority of Lumsden's narrative that I have ever heard is this, that whereas his manuscript was not edited till about 1667, the editor 'by a mere blunder committed a hundred years or nearly so after the event, and not necessarily needing a motive for doing it' changed the words *Castle of Towie* to the Castle of Corgarff. 'But he may not have altered; we may owe the whole statement to him; motive is not wanted; ignorance explains without motive.'

"This, though made by a respectable authority on ballad literature, is the maddest of criticism. Even if we could adopt the wild suggestion that the statement did not exist in the original manuscript, it is impossible that the editor, himself a Forbes, presumably of the years of manhood, of superior intelligence, as is shown by his preface, and certainly interested in the family history—could in 1667 be 'ignorant' in the matter of so outstanding a detail of so tragic an incident in the family story.

"But contemporary record does not rest here. In the *Diurnall of Occurrents* the narrative runs thus: 'In this same moneth the said Adame Gordoun send capitane Ker to the place of Toway requesting the ladie thairof to rander—not the Castle of Towie but '*the place of Carrigill* to him in the quenis name, quhilk showald nawayes doe; quhairof the said Adame having knowlege, movit in iyre towartis hir, causit raise fyre thairintill, quhairin sho, hir dauchteris and vtheris personis wer destroyit, to the nowmer of xxvij or thairby.'<sup>3</sup>

"Carrigill is in Gaelic *Coire ghobhail*, the corrie of the fork,<sup>4</sup> hence Corriehoul and Corriehoul; and as Towie and Corriehoul are from 14 to 15 miles apart and separated by the two parishes of Invernochty and Migvie, the Castle of Towie could not by any construction be called the place of Corriehoul.

"From the above narrative three points are clear—first, that the place of which Ker was sent to demand the surrender was 'the place of Corriehoul'; second, that the demand was refused, and third, that 'on the said Adam having knowledge of this he caused raise fire thereintill'—that is manifestly, on the very construction of the sentence, intil the place of Corriehoul.

"Little need be said about subsequent chronicles, which, without exception, are all one way. The ballad of 'Edom o' Gordoun' itself is distinct in picturesque detail. Next there follows the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen," 1732, a manuscript preserved in the library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh,<sup>5</sup> in which, under the heading of the Parish of Towie, the following statement occurs:—'Towie Castle, built by the Forbeses of Brux, now ruinous. Not it, as Crawford in his Queen Mary Reports, but Corgarf castle in Strathdon parish was burnt A.D. MDLXXI. (by one Captain Ker, sent by Sir Adam Gordon of Auchindoun, to take it for Queen Mary), together with the lady thereof and

<sup>1</sup> *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. iv. pp. 760-3. This minute does not appear in the published *Privy Council Register*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Genealogy of the Family of Forbes*, ed. 1819, pp. 43, 44; ed. 1889, pp. 54, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Diurnall of Occurrents in Scotland*, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> Macdonald, *Place-Names of Western Aberdeenshire*, p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> (Now, of course, the National Library of Scotland.—W. D. S.)

the whole family (thirty-seven in all), except Alexander Forbes, the owner, who was absent.<sup>1</sup> And finally the Rev. John Gordon, minister of Strathdon, in his description of the parish for the *Old Statistical Account* of 1794, says:—"The most ancient building in the parish still entire is the castle of Corgarff. . . . During the feuds between the Gordons and the Forbesses it was burnt in 1571 by Adam Gordon of Auchindown or some of his officers," and he adds that the lady of Towie "Margaret Campbell, daughter to Campbell of Calder, then big with child, together with her children and servants, 27 in number, were cruelly burnt to death."<sup>2</sup> These form evidence of persistent tradition—local tradition that is practically unbroken."

The weight of local tradition, upon which Mr Elmslie Smith rightly lays much emphasis, is even stronger in favour of Corgarff than he imagined. Charles Dawson, in his notes to the poem *Don*, like the reverend statistician at the same period, is quite clear that the tragedy took place at Corgarff: and his evidence is all the more remarkable because he relates the incident, not in describing Corgarff Castle, but in the course of his account of the parish of Towie. After describing the older church site at Nether Towie, he alludes to the reputed grave there of Margaret Campbell—"Lady Campbell" he calls her—"who was the last person buried there: she, with her children and servant maid, were choaked with the smoke, when Adam Gordon of Auchindown set fire to the Castle of Corgarff, in her husband's absence."<sup>3</sup> Yet again, while our printed texts of the "Edom o' Gordoun" ballad, following the error, have all substituted "house of Towie," Laing in the *Donean Tourist*, published in 1828, expressly tells us, in two distinct places, that a traditional version was "sung by the country people, who constantly shift the scene of action to Corgarff"—a testimony which gains all the more weight because Laing himself believed that Towie was the true *locus*. "The metonymy of Corgarff," he admits, "is found in all the traditional copies."<sup>4</sup> And, further, in the old story of the murder of the Gordon chiefs by Forbes of Drumminor, it is said that Lord Forbes, in attempting to extenuate his conduct, made the remark that "the blood that now flows on the floor of Drimnor will just help to sloaken the auld fire of Corgarf."<sup>5</sup> Andrew Picken, who tells the story, also gives an account elsewhere of the burning of Corgarff Castle, remarking that "the scene of this barbarous tragedy . . . is said in the ballad to be Towie Castle. . . . But all the traditionary accounts of value agree that the scene was Corgarff Castle. . . . The cause of the confounding of the two castles seems to have been that both formerly belonged to the same owner (a Forbes): but a MS.

<sup>1</sup> *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 611-2.

<sup>2</sup> *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. xiii. p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> *Don, a Poem*, ed. 1905, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Donean Tourist*, pp. 100, 107: cf. also p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> A. Picken, *Traditional Stories of Old Families*, 1833, vol. i. p. 39. He tells us that he obtained the story from "the present Sir John Hay, Bart."

account of the unfortunate occurrence which we have seen, in the handwriting of the father of the present Sir Charles Forbes, a gentleman who was extremely well acquainted with the traditions of the neighbourhood, which states that Corgarff and not Towie, was the scene of the burning, would seem to be sufficiently decisive of the question."<sup>1</sup> All this is proof of a singular clear, constant, and undeviating local tradition, standing in fullest harmony with the best contemporary evidence.

The celebrated seventeenth-century scholar and geographer, Robert Gordon of Straloch (1580-1661), in addition to compiling a *History of the Illustrious Family of the Gordons*, also wrote an *Introduction and Notes* to Archbishop Spottiswood's *History of the Church and State of Scotland*. The *Introduction* was printed by Dr George Garden in his edition of the works of Dr John Forbes of Corse, published at Amsterdam in 1703;<sup>2</sup> but the *Notes*, so far as I am aware, have never appeared in print. They were used, however, in 1741 by James Man in his *Introduction* to his projected *Memoirs of Scots Affairs*.<sup>3</sup> Man tells us that he had constructed Straloch's "Preface to Spotswood's History (which I have seen written with the author's own hand, with some short Notes upon that History."<sup>4</sup> In the course of his *Introduction* Man remarks: "but Straloch, in his History [*i.e.* the *History of the Illustrious Family of the Gordons*], has not thought fit to take notice of the barbarous cruelty soon after committed by Adam Gordon, who burnt the House of Alexander Forbes (not of *Tavoy*, as says Spotswood, but according to Straloch's Note, *Corgarf*) and in it his Lady big with Child, and his Children and Servants, to the Number of 27 Persons."<sup>5</sup> Here then we have proof that the clear-headed and accurate local geographer, born within a decade of the tragedy, knew that it took place not at Towie but at Corgarff. It is impossible to believe that he could have been mistaken.

The statement by Wishart that it was a *diruta arx de Kargarf* to which Montrose retired in 1645, acquires a possible significance in con-

<sup>1</sup> A. Picken, *Traditional Stories of Old Families*, 1833, vol. i. pp. 37-8. The father of Sir Charles Forbes (1774-1849) of Newe was the Rev. George Forbes, minister of Leochel from 6th July 1768-30th August 1799 (*New Statistical Account*, vol. xii. p. 1123).

<sup>2</sup> *Johannis Forbesii a Corse Opera Omnia*, vol. i. pp. 68-70: *Domini Roberti Gordon a Pittburg et Straloch Præfatio in Historiam Ecclesiasticam D. Johannis Spotswoodi*.

<sup>3</sup> Man's *Introduction* is printed as Appendix I. to the Preface to James Gordon's *History of Scots Affairs*, Spalding Club edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. i. p. xvi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix. The account of the tragedy in Spottiswood's *History* (ed. 1655, p. 259) runs as follows: "Not long afterwards he [Adam Gordon] sent to summon the house of Tavoy pertaining to Alexander Forbes. The Lady refusing to yield without direction from her husband, he put fire unto it, and burnt her therein with children and servants, being 27 persons in all. This inhumane and barbarous cruelty made his name odious, and stayed all his former doings: otherwise he was held both active and fortunate in his enterprises."

nection with the question. In view of the dispute between the Erskines and the Elphinstones about the old Mar lands, and the consequent uncertainty of tenures in Strathdon about this time, it is by no means



Fig. 11. Towie Castle: view from S.

improbable that the castle, burnt out in 1571, might wait long years for restoration. On the other hand, we know that it was in condition at least to be "fortified and kept" by Alexander Forbes and his "limmers" in 1607. The evidences of fire possibly visible in the cellars may date, of course, either from 1571 or from 1689.

According to Dawson's notes, Towie Castle was *never finished*.<sup>1</sup> Whether this be true or not, it seems to me that there is architectural evidence available in its extant ruins which is not without its bearing on the problem. The two round angle turrets (see view, fig. 11) rest upon corbelling of the key-pattern type which is very frequent in Aberdeenshire and the north-east at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for example at Knock Castle, dating from *circa* 1600. This work is quite decidedly later than 1571, the date of the catastrophe of which Towie is the alleged scene. Another significant

detail is the way in which the gable between these turrets is reduced to a mere strip, scarcely wider than the chimney into which it rises.

<sup>1</sup> *Don, a Poem*, ed. 1903, pp. 7-8. "It broke three lairds in rearing up what of it now remains; and the three different kinds of work are visible to this day." No trace of this alleged threefold masonry can now be seen.

This also is a very late feature: it may be paralleled in the same district at Glenbuchat Castle, dated 1590, and was also present in the original state of Braemar Castle, built in 1628, as shown by a drawing preserved in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup> Now there is not the slightest evidence that these upper works at Towie Castle are the result of a reconstruction: the whole fragment of which they form part has every appearance of being a work of one design and date, and that not earlier than about the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is extremely unlikely that the castle if burnt would be so utterly destroyed as to require a complete rebuilding, from the ground upwards: the shell of the fabric would still remain, more or less intact; and considerable fragments of it, at the least, would be embodied in the later work. But of this there exists no evidence at Towie. My own view, based on architectural considerations alone, is that the castle of Towie cannot date at the earliest from before the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of course, we must remember that what is now seen at Towie is only a fragment: but the whole original design (see plan, fig. 12) is still apparent, and is that of an ordinary small house on the L-plan, which is *a priori* likely to be a work of one period. The long corridor plan of the main house is distinctly a seventeenth-century feature: in earlier examples of the L-plan, the two wings of the building are usually of about equal size—as at Braemar Castle (fig. 8), which dates originally from 1628.

Further, from charters of 1561 and 1618, it appears that the manor place of the barony of Towie was then at Nether Towie, a mile or so to the south-east.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, therefore, the present ruin cannot be earlier than the latter date: and with this its architectural characteristics are in complete accord.

We are now in a position to sum up the argument as follows:—

I. In 1571, the date of the tragedy, Corgarff Castle was in the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 64, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1546–80, No. 1404; *ibid.*, 1609–20, No. 1763. At Nether Towie, according to Dawson (*Don*, ed. 1805, p. 8), the parish church also formerly stood. On the evidence, therefore, it might appear that the original nucleus of the barony of Towie, with castle and church in proximity as usual, was at Nether Towie; and that early in the seventeenth century the old centre was deserted, and the castle whose ruins now remain was begun, in a new locality, whither the parish church followed, according to Dawson, in 1662. It tells against this hypothesis that a grave-slab of late mediæval date still exists in the present churchyard (see *Trans. Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, vol. ii. part viii., 1893, p. 18). But the charter evidence that the baronial manor place, as late as 1618, stood at Nether Towie is unmistakable.

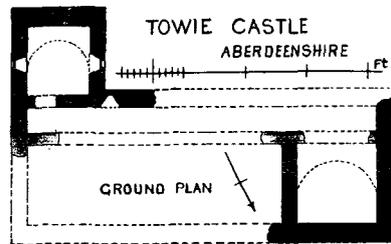


Fig. 12. Towie Castle: ground plan.

possession of the Forbesees of Towie. At that date the manor place of the barony of Towie was not where the present castle stands, but at Nether Towie, a mile to the south-east. Judged by its architectural style, the present castle of Towie is not older than about the beginning of the seventeenth century and could not therefore have been the scene of the outrage.

II. Of the four sixteenth-century writers who record the event—Bannatyne's *Journal* (1573); the *Diurnall of Occurrents* (1575); Lumsden's *Genealogy* (1580); and the *Historie and Life of King James the Sixth* (1596)<sup>1</sup>—two, Lumsden and the *Diurnall*, are decisive for Corgarff; one, Bannatyne, is dubious; and the fourth, the *Historie*, speaks definitely of the "Castell of Towy." The evidence of the two writers in favour of Corgarff is conclusive, because (a) Matthew Lumsden is the one *local* chronicler; he was writing within a decade of the event; had himself suffered in the Forbes-Gordon wars and was connected with the injured family, of which he was the historian; so that on all accounts it is utterly inconceivable that in regard to so memorable a tragedy his express statement, twice repeated, could have been founded on a mistake: (b) not having any local knowledge, the reference by the author of the *Diurnall* to the "place of Carriegill" is the more conclusive, as it could not possibly be a slip.

III. As to the other two writers, none of whom have any local connection or special knowledge, the "house of Towie" in Bannatyne is (as Mr Elmslie Smith explains) a natural mistake of one writing at a distance, and not knowing the circumstances of the Towie family and their then possession of Corgarff; while the "Castle of Towie" in the *Historie*—the latest of the works—represents the final crystallisation of the error.

IV. The weight of contemporary evidence is thus overwhelming in favour of Corgarff. The whole confusion has arisen from the fact that in 1571 the Towie family were staying not at Towie Castle—which in all probability was not yet in existence—but in the castle of Corgarff. Ignorance of this, on the part of writers at a distance, caused a very natural error: and the point here falls to be stressed, that while in the circumstances the substitution of Towie for Corgarff is perfectly intelligible, the contrary mistake, alleged to have taken place in Lumsden's work, would be quite inexplicable.

V. A continuous current of local tradition, clear and undeviating, supports Corgarff. While it is granted that tradition is often a fickle guide, it is here so consistent, so undeviating, so ample, and so well

<sup>1</sup> Edited for the Bannatyne Club in 1825, p. 97. This authority is not mentioned by Mr Elmslie Smith.

authenticated that, when taken into connection with all the other evidence on the subject, it carries a very great weight indeed. The Towie error, in fact, has always been purely literary and confined to works unconnected with the district; whereas local tradition and record alike have never for a moment wavered in clearly pointing to Corgarff.

If the above evidence be carefully sifted and critically judged, I do not think much doubt can linger that the scene of the Edom o' Gordoun tragedy was the castle of Corgarff. In view of its connection with this cruel deed of clan vengeance; the stormy part it played in the wars of Montrose and the three Jacobite risings; and its occupation as a garrisoned post in the period of pacification that followed—an occupation bringing its military history down almost to within living memory—in view of all these facts, it may be fairly claimed that there is more history connected with this lonely tower than with any other secular building either of Donside or Deeside—Kildrummy Castle alone excepted. Simple and unpretentious though it is, we have seen also that from the architectural standpoint it is by no means devoid of importance. I submit that for both these reasons Corgarff Castle is without doubt a national monument; and it is a matter for the deepest dissatisfaction that it should now be hastening so rapidly to utter decay.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE, JANUARY 1927.

The foregoing account was already in type when I chanced upon an article, published in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, June 1905,<sup>1</sup> by my predecessor the late Mr P. J. Anderson, M.A., LL.B., Librarian in the University of Aberdeen, giving an inventory of eighteenth-century maps of Aberdeenshire in the British Museum. From this note it appeared that, besides the surveys discussed at pp. 78-80, there existed in the Museum a number of other sheets of drawings of both Corgarff and Braemar Castles. I have now had an opportunity to examine these, and the fresh information thus available is set forth in this Additional Note.

The following is a list of the Corgarff sheets, with their catalogue numbers in the King's Collection at the British Museum Library.

- Kxlx. (14) *a.* "Ground about Corgarff Castle."  
*b.* "Plans of Corgarff Castle"—all floors, showing original state. Scale 10 feet = 1 inch.

<sup>1</sup> Second series, vol. vi. pp. 186-7.

- c. "Plan and section of Corgarff Castle as it stands at present," and "Plan and Section of Corgarff Castle, with the designed Pavilions and Repairs." Scale 20 feet = 1 inch.
- d. "Corgarff Castle"—plans and section before and after repair, as above, but without dimensions indicated or scale.
- e. "Corgarff Castle, with the designed Repairs"—plans showing all floors. Scale, 10 feet = 1 inch.
- f. "Plan of the first floor [*i.e.* basement] of Corgarff Castle, with the new additions." Scale, 10 feet = 1 inch.
- g. "Design for Corgarff Castle," showing a proposed field-work. Scale, 40 feet = 1 inch: profile at twice scale.
- h. "Section of Corgarff Castle as it stands at present," and "Section of Corgarff Castle, with the designed Repairs."

The great importance of these extra drawings lies in the presence among them of various copies (sheets *b*, *c*, *d*, and *h*, as above) of a survey made by the military authorities when they took the castle over in 1748, before the reconstruction and additions. This survey, therefore, gives us an accurate idea of the state of the building subsequently to the restoration after its burning in 1689. It preserves a record of many original features modified or obliterated in 1748, and enables us to understand exactly the nature of the alterations effected at that time. Sheet *c* has been selected for reproduction herewith (fig. 13).

A glance at the drawings of the castle "as it stands at present" will show that the most interesting feature revealed is the fact that originally the tower was vaulted at a high level over the main floor or hall. It is also seen that the present mid-partition on the hall floor dates only from 1748; and that prior to that date the means of access to the door on this level was by a straight flight of steps ascending eastward along the south front of the tower.

The following is a detailed statement of the points of difference observable in the measured drawings of the tower as before reconstruction.

*Basement.*—The loop in the south wall of the west cellar, omitted in the plan at fig. 7, is here shown: it just clears the stair-foot outside. This cellar is also drawn with a loophole in the middle of the west face.<sup>1</sup> The east cellar has what appears to be a small recess in its

<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to visit the castle since these additional plans were discovered, but Mr John Dunn, Allargue Arms Hotel, has kindly made an inspection of the west wall of the tower, and has located the built-up loophole at the place indicated.

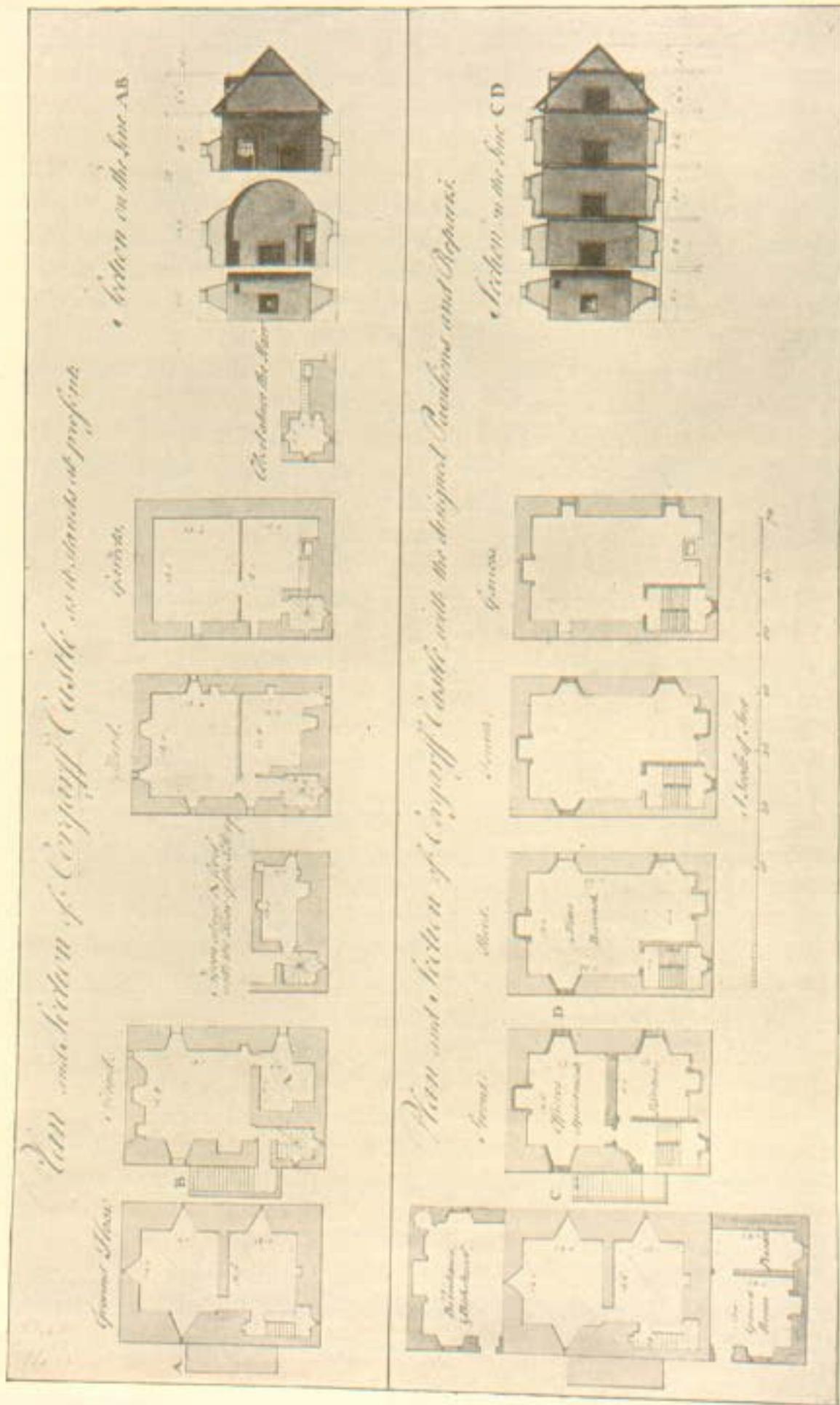


Fig. 13. Corgarff Castle: plans showing its condition before and after the reconstruction of 1748.

east wall. The aumbry at the foot of the service stair is shown, but not the loophole.

*First Floor.*—The plan at this level shows that the present mid-wall dates only from 1748. The original arrangement of this floor consisted of a vaulted hall 19 feet in length and 15 feet 8 inches broad, divided by a partition from the kitchen, a smaller vaulted room, 10 feet 6 inches by 6 feet, occupying the eastern part of the tower, so far as not taken up by the staircase in the south-east angle. The plan clearly shows that the feature now existing as a cupboard at the north end of the west wall was originally, as suggested above (p. 56), a window recess. The aumbry between the hall fireplace and this window is omitted. In the north wall the west window, absent from the plan at fig. 7, is shown, but smaller than at present. The entry to the garderobe in this wall, but not the garderobe itself, is shown. In the position of the present east window of the south wall a deep recess appears. The old wide kitchen fireplace is most evident.

Above the low vault of the kitchen, at a height corresponding with the haunch of the lofty vault over the hall, was an entresol chamber, 13 feet by 6 feet, entered from the newel stair. The entresol had a fireplace in the east wall, with an aumbry to the north of it, a window in the north wall at the east angle, a garderobe closet at the north-west angle, and an aumbry in the middle of the west wall. Of these features the fireplace, east aumbry, window, and part of the garderobe (all as described above, p. 57) still exist on the present second floor, which was inserted in 1748 at the haunch-level of the old hall vault—the vault and entresol being then cleared away.

*Second Floor.*—Owing to the above rearrangement, this corresponds, of course, to the present third floor level. It is shown as divided by a wooden partition into two rooms, the western one measuring 18 feet by 15 feet 4 inches, and the eastern one 12 feet 8 inches by 11 feet 3 inches. The latter room was curtailed on the south side by a lobby of access to the stair. In the west room the plan shows that the present cupboard at the south end of the west wall has been converted from an original window. The window, now blocked, in the north wall of this room, with the aumbry adjoining it to the east, are both shown: on the south side there was only one window. In the other room all the features shown have survived to the present day, except that the present window in the north wall is not drawn. This window, as pointed out above (p. 58), clearly belongs to the military occupation.

*Garret.*—This floor is shown divided by a wooden partition into two rooms, measuring 18 feet by 15 feet 4 inches and 10 feet 6 inches respectively. The west room had only one window—doubtless a roof-light—on

the south side, and no other features of any kind are shown. The east room was curtailed by the square projection of the staircase at the south-east corner. It was lit by a single window—again doubtless a roof-light—in the south wall near the west end. The deep recess now existing at the north end of the east wall is shown. If this recess represents an original entry to a turret, as suggested above (pp. 54, 58), it would seem that this turret had disappeared in the restoration after 1689. Into the south part of the east wall was niched a straight stair of seven steps ascending southward to a cap-house chamber over the stairhead. This chamber was 6 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 6 inches, and had loopholes on the east, west, and south sides, with a cupboard or fireplace to the east of the door in the north wall. The north and west walls were evidently of stone, the cap-house turret being thus fully relieved from the roof, unlike its present successor.

The newel stair is shown on every floor within a square case. On all floors it is lit by a loophole on each face, south and east: at the entresol level a loop only in the east face is shown.

The external stone stair consisted of fifteen steps ascending eastwards along the south wall to a landing at the main door level.

The section, taken looking west, shows the west cellar vaulted as at present at a height of 8 feet, while the hall is covered by a lofty barrel-vault with a transverse axis at a height of 14 feet 6 inches. The north window of the west cellar, which is shown in section, had a stepped sole. The hall windows in the north and south walls had lofty bays rising into scoinson arches in the haunches of the vault. Two windows in the west wall, one in the hall and the other on the floor above, were small, set within tall bays, and filled with four glass panes. The roof was a plain one with ties and hanging pieces, resting on the wall-head without a parapet. The section passes through the west skylight.

Apart from minor divergences, the plans showing the "designed pavilions and repairs" exhibit the following important points of difference from the survey illustrated at fig. 7. On the first floor they show that the original intention was to build one large window in the north wall of the east room, clearing away the old small kitchen window with sink and the garderobe adjoining. This room is labelled "Kitchin," and the west room "Officers' Apartment." Afterwards, as shown by the painted designations on the doors now extant, the kitchen was turned into a second officers' apartment; and the conjecture may be hazarded that at that time the "brewhouse" in the west pavilion was altered into its present state to provide a new kitchen. In the west room the two wooden enclosures, shown at fig. 7, are absent. The plan of the second floor, labelled "Men's

Barrack,"<sup>1</sup> and the third floor plan shows that on each of these floors two large windows were designed to be slapped out in the north wall, but only one in the south wall. In the garret plan the stair to the cap-house chamber is omitted.

The plan also shows that it was at first proposed to retain the old straight outer stone stair to the main door. The pavilions are shown precisely as in fig. 7. In the east pavilion the rooms are labelled "Gaurd-room" and "Prison" (*cf. supra*, p. 80), and the west pavilion is entitled "Brewhouse & Bakehouse."<sup>2</sup>

The section, when compared with that taken before the reconstruction, shows very clearly how the interior of the tower was changed by cutting out the main vault and entresol, replacing the floor resting on the main vault by a floor of wood, and inserting an extra wooden floor at the old haunch level. The roof is shown precisely as in the pre-reconstruction plan, and differs from that in the later survey (fig. 7). In the latter the roof comes down upon the wall-head at its outer face, whereas in the latter it rests midway on the wall-head. Possibly it was at first designed to retain the old roof, which would be that built after the destruction of 1689.

We thus learn that Corgarff Castle prior to 1748 was a tower-house containing two vaulted cellars in the basement, a lofty vaulted hall on the first floor, with a small and low vaulted kitchen adjoining it to the east; a vaulted entresol over the kitchen; and an unvaulted upper storey and garret occupying the full area of the tower above. The main entrance to the tower was into the hall at the first floor level: from the kitchen a straight service stair in the south wall led down to the cellarage; while a newel stair in a square case at the south-east angle—reached from the hall by a passage across the south end of the kitchen—served the upper floors. In so strongly vaulted a tower the fires of 1571 and 1689 would affect little but the roof and the two upper wooden floors. After the latter destruction the original wall-head arrangements were altered, and a plain roof built: this was reconstructed on very similar lines during the Hanoverian occupation.

As the *mâchicoulis* chamber above the door is not shown on the plan made when the military authorities then took the castle over, it would seem that this feature had been cleared away in the reconstruction after 1689; when also perhaps a turret at the north-east angle was removed. By 1748 the original access to the main door, doubtless by a wooden ladder, had been superseded by a straight stone stair ascending

<sup>1</sup> Plan *e* shows this room divided into cubicles, the outlines of which have been pencilled in by a later hand.

<sup>2</sup> The same designations appear on plan *f*.

along the face of the wall. This stair was possibly built in the reconstruction after 1689. The Hanoverian engineer at first planned to retain this stair, but in the event it was replaced by a stair of two flights at right angles (fig. 7), which at a still later date was improved by the addition of a pentice porch over the landing. The setting out of the old straight stair had been conditioned by the fact that its foot had to be kept clear of the loophole from the west cellar: and it must accordingly have been inconveniently steep, with a rise of 6 feet in a horizontal distance of 12 feet. As the stair contained fifteen steps, its inconvenience can be readily imagined.

The survey made before the reconstruction of 1748 shows no outbuildings to the tower, but it would be rash to assume that by that time these had already been swept away. If they still survived they were clearly then condemned, and the military surveyor may have concerned himself only with the tower, which was to be refashioned.

One interesting feature revealed by these newly discovered plans is the very remarkable resemblance between Corgarff Castle, as originally built, and the tower on the island of Little Cumbrae, at the entrance to the Firth of Clyde. The close parallelism between the two buildings will be understood from a glance at the plans of Little Cumbrae Castle (fig. 14). Like Corgarff, it was a tower-house consisting of three

storeys and a garret, the basement containing two vaulted cellars, the first floor a lofty vaulted hall with a small kitchen at one end, and the two upper floors each a single room. At Little Cumbrae Castle, however, there is no entresol over the kitchen. At both castles the door is in the same end of the hall, and beside it a spiral stair rises to all floors above, while a service stair descends to the cellars: but whereas at Corgarff Castle this service stair is a separate straight flight, at Little Cumbrae it is formed by a continuation of the main spiral stair downwards. The ground-floor entrance at Little Cumbrae, shown on the plan, is an afterthought.<sup>1</sup> In dimensions Little Cumbrae Castle slightly exceeds Corgarff: it measures about 41 feet by 29 feet, and is about

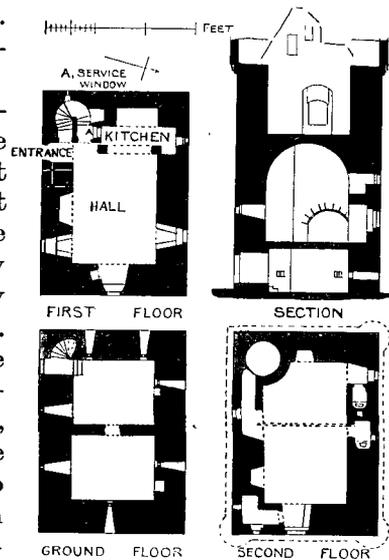


Fig. 14. Little Cumbrae Castle: plans and section.

<sup>1</sup> MacGibbon and Ross, *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 178. The plan shown herewith (fig. 14) is reproduced from that work by permission of Dr Ross.

46 feet in height to the wall-head, exclusive of the open parapet. The hall vault is 20 feet in height, considerably exceeding that at Corgarff. The castle of Little Cumbrae was doubtless erected in consequence of a grant dated 31st May 1527, whereby the island was given to Robert Hunter of Hunterston and his wife Janet Montgumry, on condition of their "building and keeping up a sufficient mansion-house on the said lands, with hall, chamber, and other buildings."<sup>1</sup> This date accords well enough with that assignable to Corgarff Castle on such indirect evidence as is available (see above, p. 66).

Plan *g*, "Design for Corgarff Castle," is of special interest as showing the complete scheme of fieldworks which was proposed by Colonel Watson. The castle itself, with its pavilions, but with no curtain, is indicated in block outline. To the north of it is drawn a "Garden standing on hanging Ground from the Back of the Castle." To the south, the drawing shows the lay-out of an elaborate entrenched camp of rectangular pattern, with a re-entrant angle on the south front, and open, full bastions on either flank. This ambitious scheme was not carried out: for the large entrenchment a modest curtain wall round the castle was substituted; but we have seen (p. 65) that an attempt, never completed, was afterwards made to construct a fieldwork of less pretentious design to the southward of the castle.

Plan *a*, "Ground about Corgarff Castle," is important because it preserves the disposition of the ancient roads before the Hanoverian engineers carried out their reorganisation (see fig. 6) in 1753-4. The castle is shown with its pavilions, but no curtain wall or entrenched camp. The road from Braemar crosses the Cock Burn well above the castle, descends its left bank, passes by the east flank of the castle, and then, swerving to the right, crosses the burn again and joins the road from Aberdeen. The latter follows more or less the line of the modern turnpike (see p. 84), crossing the bend of the Don at Luib. Below that point it gives off to the north a branch marked "road to Avemore," which ascends the west side of the valley of a little burn east from "Alarg." This is evidently the Milltoun Burn, and it thus appears that the ancient road, in its ascent of the watershed north of the Don, kept farther to the east than the line adopted by the engineers of the Lecht in 1754. The ancient road is still in use as a hill track, marked on the Ordnance Map as "The Green Road": it ascends the Milltoun Burn, traverses the north-east shoulder of Allargue Hill, and then strikes north-west over the saddle of *Little Corr Riabhach* and *Moine nah-wisge* to join the Lecht at its highest point of 2114 feet on the east side of Burn of Loinherry.

Two entries in the early files of the *Aberdeen Journal*, dated

<sup>1</sup> Eglinton Papers in *Historical MSS. Commission*, 10th Report, Appendix, Part I. p. 24.

respectively 3rd and 24th July 1753, cast an interesting ray of light upon the road-making activities around Castleton of Braemar in that year:—

“The same Day [*i.e.* 22nd June 1753] Lieut. Varlow of Col. Holmes' Regiment, at the Roads near the Castle town of Braemar, standing too nigh when the Men were blowing some Stones, had his Skull fractured by an unexpected Explosion. He was immediately trepanned by some Surgeons who were luckily at Hand, and is in a fair Way of recovery.”

“We hear from Braemar that last Week as some Workmen were blowing Stones at a Bridge a-building on the River Dee, one of them burst suddenly with such Violence that one Man was killed, and most of the others were very much wounded.”

The second entry is very satisfactory in that it confirms the date of the building of Invercauld Bridge (see p. 84).

Through the generosity of Mr Charles E. Whitelaw, F.S.A.Scot., the National Museum of Antiquities has recently acquired a small muzzle-loading gun or falconet (fig. 15), of wrought iron, fitted with a breech handle, recoil block on the under side, and a priming pan on the right

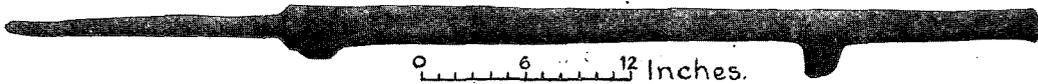


Fig. 15. Falconet found at Corgarff Castle.

side. The total length of the piece is 4 feet 9½ inches. It dates from the later sixteenth century. It was dug up at Corgarff Castle, and was sold at the sale at Inverernan House in 1925. Another somewhat similar piece of artillery from the same locality was sold at the same time. In all probability these two pieces are identical with the “barrels of two muskets” recorded to have been found at the castle just one hundred years before (see *supra*, p. 71).