



QUEENSFERRY (SOUTH)

QUEENSFERRY was erected into a Royal Burgh by King Charles I. in 1636. The Common Seal of the Burgh represents Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore, in a boat, about to step off from a gangway on to the Binks rocks. In her right hand she holds a sceptre and in her left a book. Behind is a view of the Fifeshire coast with Rosyth Castle and the Ochills in the distance.

It was from this queen that the place took the name of the Queen's Ferry, because it is these Binks rocks that are traditionally said to be the spot where she, as the Princess Margaret landed, when she, with the rest of her family, were fleeing from the Normans, and after she became queen she was in the habit of crossing the Firth of Forth at this point. Long previous to this, however, in the time of the Romans, this strait was called by them *Freti transitus*, the channel crossing, and we know that about the year 83 A.D. they had gone as far as Loch Leven, but they did not accomplish this without much fierce warfare with the natives. The "New Statistical Account" says that Queen Margaret was much beloved by the inhabitants, and that there used to be a house on the beach which was built for her accommodation while waiting for the boat, and that they even cut out her footmark in the solid rock, which footmark was said to have been in existence in the memory of the ancient inhabitants. Dr Skene in his "Celtic Scotland" tells us that she "constructed dwellings on both sides of the sea which divides Lodoneia or Lothian from Scotia—that is the Firth of Forth—that the pilgrims and the poor might put up there and rest, and find there ready everything required for the refreshment of the body. Servants were placed there to minister to them, and vessels provided in which they were ferried across without payment."

The book in her hand is the famous copy of the Gospels which she possessed. The following account of this book and the miracle of which it was the subject is taken from Turgot's "Life of Margaret," translated by Dr Metcalfe in "Ancient Lives of Scottish Saints": "She had a book of the Gospels beautifully adorned with jewels and gold, and ornamented with the figures of the four evangelists, painted and gilt. The capital letters throughout the volume were also resplendent with gold.

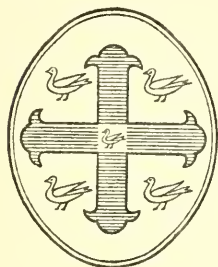
For this volume she had always a greater affection than she had for any others she was in the habit of reading. It happened that while the person who was carrying it was crossing a ford, he let the volume, which had been carelessly folded in a wrapper, fall into the middle of the stream, and ignorant of what had occurred he quietly continued his journey. But when he afterwards wished to produce the book, he, for the first time, became aware that he had lost it. It was sought for for a long time but was not found. At length it was found at the bottom of the river, lying open, so that its leaves were kept in constant motion by the action of the water, and the little coverings of silk which protected the letters of gold from being injured by the contact of the leaves were carried away by the force of the current. Who would imagine that the book would be worth anything after what had happened to it? Who would believe that even a single letter would have been visible in it? Yet of a truth it was taken up out of the middle of the river so perfect, uninjured, and free from damage, that it looked as though it had not even been touched by the water. For the whiteness of the leaves, and the form of the letters throughout the whole of the volume, remained exactly as they were before it fell into the river, except that on the margin of the leaves towards the edge, some trace of the water could with difficulty be detected. The book was conveyed to the queen, and the miracle reported to her at the same time, and she having given thanks to Christ, esteemed the volume much more highly than she did before. Wherefore let others consider what they should think of this, but as for me I am of opinion that this miracle was wrought by our Lord because of His love for this venerable queen."

King Malcolm IV., the great-grandson of Margaret, granted the monks of Dunfermline the right of ferry, and in 1164 he made a similar grant to the monks of Scone of the *Portum Reginæ*. Pope Gregory confirmed to the Abbey of Dunfermline "*dimidium passagii scantæ Margaritæ Reginæ*" in 1294. King Robert Bruce again, granted the place as a Burgh of regality to the monks of Dunfermline, which was re-granted by King Robert III., and confirmed in 1450 by King James II., and as said at the beginning, King Charles I. erected it into a Royal Burgh. This proceeding was strenuously opposed by Linlithgow, but in spite of this opposition, Queensferry, in 1641, was finally recognised as a Royal Burgh.

The early history of Rosyth Castle is involved in the deepest obscurity. It is not known who was the builder of it, or at what period it was built. Built on a promontory to the west of St. Margaret's Hope, it is insulated at high tide. The family of Stewart of Rosyth claimed to be descended from James, the brother of Walter the Lord High Steward of Scotland who married Marjory Bruce. The castle was said to have been a summer residence of Queen Mary, and it has been affirmed that it was the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell's mother who is said to have been Elizabeth Stewart, and to have claimed descent from the Stewart Royal Family. The original Stewart possessors sold it in 1694 to one David Drummond of Inverary, and after a few more changes of ownership it now belongs to the Marquis of Linlithgow.

The Town Clerk kindly sent me an impression of the old Seal of the Burgh, bearing the Burgh Arms. One side represents Queen Margaret landing, from which the Seal now in use was taken. The other side, here shown, bears a cross which is

said to symbolise the attachment of Queen Margaret to the Christian faith. In each angle of the cross is a sea fowl, and one in the centre. The legend regarding these five birds is, that at the moment when Queen Margaret landed on the Binks rocks



five sea birds appeared in the air, forming, as they flew, the Sign of the Cross, and the legend further narrates that they alighted on the rigging of the vessel, their position there still having the form of a cross. It is quite possible there may be some grain of truth in the appearance of these birds, and in these early times, if accidentally they had the form of a cross in their flight, this would at once be seized upon as a good augury.

A curious ceremony, known as the procession of the "Burryman," is still observed at Queensferry on the day preceding the annual festival, in commemoration of the passage of the Firth of Forth at this point by "St. Margaret the Queen." This ceremony takes place on the second Friday of August. The "Burryman" is a man who is clothed in flannel which is covered with the burrs of the Burdock, which are absolutely necessary for the proper observance of the ceremony which has been in vogue from time immemorial. The "Burryman" is conducted all through the town by two attendants, and at every door he receives a donation, which amounts to a considerable sum, and which is spent next day at the annual festival or fair by the youth of the place who have been responsible for the due carrying out of the proceedings. Sometimes two persons were dressed in flannel, decorated with burrs and led about, and they were respectively called the "King" and "Queen," the whole proceedings being, it is said, an allusion to the passage of King Malcolm and Queen Margaret through the town.