

Dunnottar and its Barons

IN the course of examining some old family papers,¹ the writer recently came upon certain accounts and inventories relating to a line of great noblemen of Scotland, the Keiths, Earls Marischal of Scotland. From these papers an interesting picture may be drawn of the domestic amenities and the equipment of their Castle of Dunnottar, situated on a rock nearly four acres in extent on the coast of The Mearns, one mile south of Stonehaven.

The direct line came to an end in the two greatest companions—or perhaps they ought to be called acquaintances, for they, at all events, were the soul of honour—of ‘Pickle the Spy,’ namely, George Keith, the last Earl, the friend of Frederick the Great and correspondent of Voltaire, and James Keith, his brother, the celebrated Field Marshal of Prussia.

There were Keiths of lineage in the country in the time of Malcolm and Margaret, but the story of their having come as a tribe called Catti from the Rhenish provinces of Germany and settled in Caithness and subsequently forming the Clan Chattan, may be discarded along with the fable of their coat-of-arms having originated in the Scottish king dipping his three fingers in the blood of the Danish Camus at Barry about 1010 A.D. and drawing three strokes on the shield of a valiant Keith of that time. It is certain that at an early date they became Marischals of Scotland, and obtained the lands of Ackergill in Caithness. But their first substantial settlement seems to have been at Keith-Hundeby of old, now called Humbie, near Dalkeith. One of the estates in this parish is Keith-Marischal, although the later barony of Keith-Marischal was in Kincardineshire. Numerous chartularies and charters bear evidence

¹The papers referred to are Keith Papers, in the possession of the Ochtertyre family. They were courteously lent to the writer by the late proprietor.

of their presence in the Lothians. They mingled in the stirring events of the War of Independence, leading the horse at Bannockburn, and fighting at Rosslyn and Harlaw; and by the time of Robert the Bruce certainly—if not long before, as some contend—the dignity of Marischal (which at that time was more of a court than a military office) had become fixed in the family.

The Mounth, which divided Strathmore from Mar and Buchan, had for hundreds of years in the Pictish-Scotic period been of very great strategic importance, and many of the most stirring events of that remote time were enacted a few miles from Dunnottar Castle. Kincardine Castle, in the parish of Fordoun, commanded the principal—indeed, the only practicable—road to the north over The Mounth. Cowie Castle, near Stonehaven, commanded the littoral pass, subsequently named The Causeway—and identical with Dugald Dalgetty's forlorn hereditament of Drumthwacket—to Aberdeen. The province was long in the hands of chiefs, who had their duns or forts among the hills, as at Fotherdoun (now called Green Castle). The Crown appropriated the territory when the government had become more settled—notably Kincardine or the Fotherdoun of the Chronicles, which became a royal palace.

When Robert the Bruce succeeded, he took care to reward his supporters; and to the Keith he granted Hall Forest, which remained in the family till the forfeiture of 1715.

Sir William Keith, who had by marriage acquired the Forest of Cowie, including Dunnottar, proceeded to build a Tower upon the Rock of Dunnottar, and in this way exposed himself to the wrath of the clergy, who excommunicated him in consequence. The church or cell of St. Ninian had occupied the rock of Dunnottar up to that time either by itself or along with the original fortress. The Pope afterwards removed the ban on condition of a new church being erected, and this was done at a spot near the present church of Dunnottar. At what time the rock itself had been consecrated to this sacred use is not quite clear, but probably it was about 1270. Dunnottar thus became the chief castle of the Keith family. The family continued to increase in power, and the Keith of 1455 was first made Lord Keith, and then the first Earl Marischal. There was a line of ten Earls between 1455 and 1715, and there is hardly a Scotch noble family who have not the blood of the Keiths in their veins.

The documents above referred to cover the period of the fifteenth and two following centuries. The Keiths kept up a state almost royal, and from the beginning of the sixteenth century at latest the hospitality of Dunnottar was frequently extended to king and nobles. The earlier kings were often at Dunnottar. On 15th October, 1503, James IV. was entertained at Dunnottar, as the book of his treasurer records 'that samyn nycht in Dunnottar, to the cheld playit on the monocordes, be the king's command, xviijs.' were disbursed. When Queen Mary visited the North during the contentions between the Gordons and the Earl of Murray in the year 1562, she was entertained at Dunnottar, for Pitscottie relates that 'upon the feird day of November, the Queen came out of Aberdeine to Dunnottar.' James VI. also honoured Dunnottar, 'for the kyngis grace come to Dunnottar the xvij. day of June, the year of God 1580 years; and the fyrst tyme that I, Walter Cullen, Reder of Aberden, sehit his grace, was the xx. day of the said moneth of June, 1580 yeirs; and that, at the wod of Fetteresso, he beand at the huntis with sertane of his lordis; and thaireftir I paist to Dunnottar, quhair I beheld his grace at his supar, quhill he paist to his chalmer; and thaireftir his grace paist furtht of Dunnottar, the xxij day of June, 1580 years to Ezail.' He visited it again, 1617, and in March 1641 the Earl of Winton, with his son, Lord Seton, who had Mr. Andrew Cant in their company, 'war weill intertynneit, the Lady Marshall being the Erll of Wintoun's dochter.' Here also, on 8th July, 1650, Charles II., when he came to Scotland to be crowned, accompanied by the Dukes of Buckingham and Hamilton, and other English and Scottish cavaliers, was sumptuously entertained. He also visited it on the 24th of February, 1651. These are samples of the guests. Now let us see what the Castle contained.

The earliest account we have of the furnishings of Dunnottar is in an inventory of 1612. George, the fifth Earl, succeeded in 1594, and possessed until 1623, dying at Dunnottar at the age of 70 years. The Inventory is thus described:

'This is the iust Inventar quhilk ane noble and potent lord George Erll Mershall, Lord Keythe, &c., and Dame Margret Ogilvie (daughter of James, Lord Ogilvie), his spous, giwes up wpoun thair credit and honour to William Maister Mershall, Lord Keythe, sone to the said noble lord, conforme to the contract past betuixt thame, quhilk Inventar the said William Maister of Mershall, Lord Keythe, &c., acceptis, grantis, and acknowleges to be just, trew, and ane perfynt Inventar, particularlie as is affoir writtin, except

ye timber wark, buikis, and armour quhairof ye Inventar salbe particularie takin wp and set down heirefter betuixt ye said noble lord and the said William Keythe his sone. In witness quhairof yis present is subscriuit be the said noble lordis and the said noble lady At Dunotter ye sewintein day off December in ye zeir of God ane thousand sex hundrethe and twelff yeiris Beffoir witnesses Johne Erll of Mar, Lord Erikine, John Levingstoun of Dunnipace, John Keyth in Couton.'

This is indorsed: 'Inventar of the plenisheing, bedding, artailzearie (artillery), &c. In Dunnottar.' The inventory of 1660 is headed: 'Ane trew Inventarie of what goodis wer belonging to the Earle Marischall and wer in the Castle of Dunnottour in the custodie of Captaine Umphra Measone, which the said Captaine Measone delyvered by order of Major Generall Morgan to Robert Keith of Whytriggs, Depute-shireff of the Countie of Kincardine, & George Ogilvy of Barrass, 10 September 1660.' This date is ten years before William, the seventh Earl, died.

Many of the articles detailed had doubtless been in use for years before 1612, but it is probable that in the latter half of the previous century numerous additions had been made to the list. This is evident from incidents in the careers of the Earls from the fourth to the seventh. William, the fourth Earl, who was at Pinkie, 1547, attended Queen Mary to France, and afterwards, although a great reformer, was a favourite of the Queen Regent. The estates suffered greatly at the hands of the anti-Covenanters, and the celebrated Cant was in Dunnottar when the Marischal's neighbouring houses and barns were burned, and consoled the unhappy nobleman with the assurance, which harmonized well with Cant's name, that it would be a sweet-smelling incense to the Lord. The fourth Earl—he died 1594—had seen splendid plenisheing in the palaces of the French kings and in the châteaux of their nobility. His son George, the fifth Earl, a pupil of Beza at Geneva, was sent by James VI. to bring Queen Ann from Denmark, for which service he obtained the Abbacy of Deir, and was made Lieutenant of the North, 1593, and founded the Marischal College in Aberdeen. He was a much travelled and learned man, and died at Dunnottar in 1623. These two Earls undoubtedly added to the furnishings of Dunnottar, for George is said to have modelled more fine houses than anyone had done before. It is suggested that in his time the quadrangle of Dunnottar subsequently referred to was built for the better accommodation of illustrious guests. William, the sixth Earl, died in 1635, and his third son was

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DUNNOTAR CASTLE

Facing page 392

made Earl of Kintore when his uncle William, the seventh Earl—who espoused the cause of Charles II.—was in possession of the Castle. The Regalia were sent to Dunnottar because of its strength, and the Castle stood an historic siege by Cromwell's troops.

The inventory of 1660 applies to the troubled times of Cromwell, and it is not nearly so full as the inventory of 1612. It merely summarises the substantial articles of furniture. There were 58 bed-steads and 58 girners—whatever they might be; hardly girnals, although girnals is sometimes spelt in this way. There were 44 tables of one kind or another distributed amongst the various rooms, and a 'lidd' of a table, or a folding table, in addition. Of chests—possibly oak—there were 44, and of chairs 49, including, no doubt, the chairs purchased half a century ago by Sir William Fraser in the Old Town of Stonehaven—one of them selling in Edinburgh four or five years ago for nearly £800. There are still two or three fairly authenticated chairs in Stonehaven and neighbourhood. There were 22 'stoolis,' more sumptuous probably than three-legged ones; and nine cupboards and 11 pressis—of the nature of wardrobes, doubtless. Of forms, which would accommodate more than a stool or a chair, and might some of them be settles, ranged along the dining, drawing, and dancing rooms, there were 20.

Unfortunately, we have no means of distinguishing what articles garnished the room which was dedicated to the king and called 'the King's Room,' and what were in the Earl's and guests' rooms, except that we find that of eight pair and five pieces of 'courtaines and vallownes' there were a 'suite of reid embroidered with silk fringes' in the king's room; while in the greine chalmers there was 'ane suite of greine with deep silk fringes and silk lace and a counterpaine.' Moreover, there were 67 feather beds, 54 coverliddis, 66 bolsters, 84 plaidis (used as blankets), and 'ane halff of blankettis'—five of them; 20 shelves, and 11 coddis—probably pillows. The inference from what follows is that the beds and bedrooms were made imposing by rich hangings, that the beds were formidable four-posters, to which the occupant ascended by the brouderit stool or chair, and that the tapestry depicted the history of Samson and probably other Scriptural characters. Who the makers of the tapestry were, we have no means of knowing; but in an inventory of writs dated January 1617 detailing writs found in a particular 'lettron' this entry occurs: 'Item William

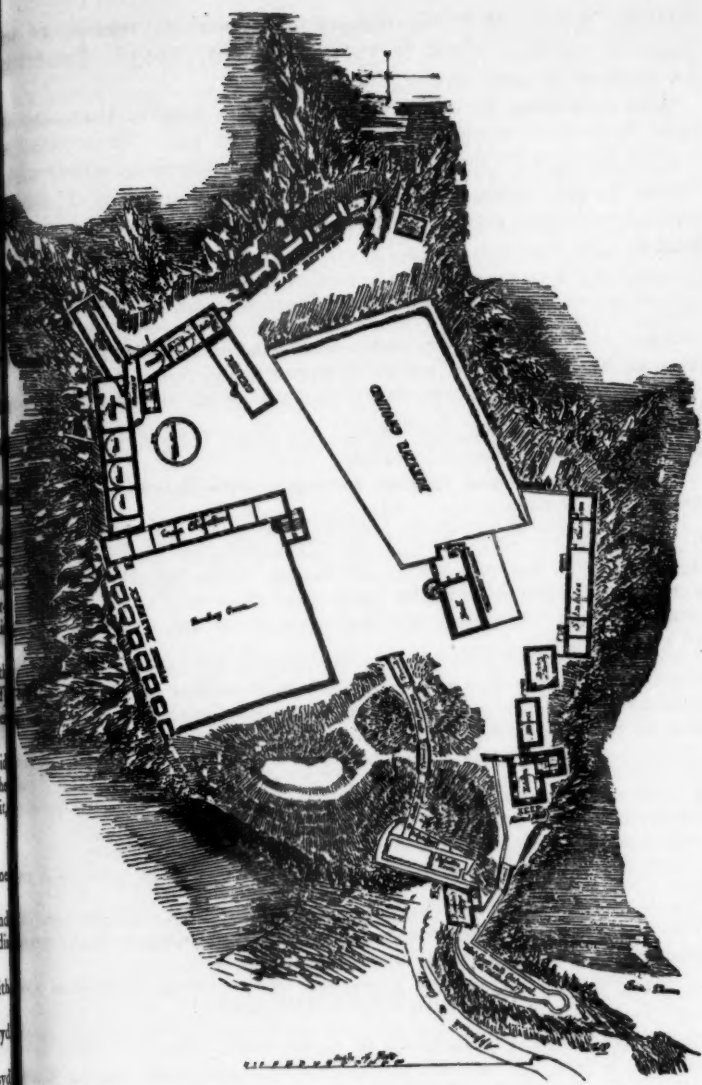
Beaton, brounder, his obligatioun upon ye receipt of a piece of tapestrie whilk is yet undelyverit, 1593.' Doubtless the best of it came from France.

The inventory of 1612 is much more graphic than that of 1660, and it is worth while to give it in full. It is called in a sub-heading: 'The Inventour off the Copboirdis silwer wark tapestrie silk bedis, plinishit brouderit bedis, plinishit timber wark, monitioun, artelzerie wark, buikis, and armour,' and then follows this curious list:

- 'Item off gilt tapestrie ane stand contenyng aught peices.
- 'Item off erras wark off the historie off Sampson contenyng sevin peices.
- 'Item ane wther stand off tapestrie off erras wark contenyng sex peices.
- 'Item of erras wark tapestrie sewin [seven] stand ewerie stand contenyng fyve pieces quhilk is in ye hail threttie—fywe peices.
- 'Item of grein steining tapestrie brouderit with quhytbridge satein contenyng fyve peices.
- 'Item ane stand of grein steining tapestrie freinzeit [fringed] with quhyt and reid worst freinzies contenyng sex peices.
- 'Item ane wther stand off grein steining tapestrie brouderit with sewing contenyng aught pices.
- 'Item ane stand of blak dames [damask] courtingis contenyng baksyd foirsyd [inside and outside] heid and feit, with ane ruiff [drawn frill] with sex pices panes [foot-pans] four stoupis with ane compter claithe [counterpaine] of blak velwot all thir pasmentit with gold [gold gimp] with ane blak silk mat all pertenning to the said bedis with ane blak velwot chyre and ane fuitgang [chair and footstool] yairto.
- 'Item ane stand of fleshe collourit spaines [Spanish] taffetic courtingis with foirsyd baksyd and feit thrie peice of panes yairto brouderit heid and ruiff [ruff] according to the same with four brouderit stoupis [posts] with ane counter claithe off reid velwot freinzeit with silk with ane mat thairto off silk.
- 'Item ane stand of grein Spaines taffetic courtingis with foirsyd baksyd heid and ruiff with thrie peices of pandis all brouderit with ane compter claithe off grein velwot pasmentit with open pasmentis off gold and silwer, freinzeit with ane chyre and fuitgang to the said bedis.
- 'Item ane cannabie [canopy] off grein damess [damask] freinzeit.
- 'Item ane sewit bed with silk and gold contenyng thretein pices with ane cannabie off grein taffetic.
- 'Item ane stand off grein steining courtingis with baksyd foirdys heid and feit with twa peices off pandis with great knapis [tassels] hingand at the pandis with ane chyre brouderit to the said bedis.
- 'Item ane stand of changing growgrame [silk] courtingis brouderit with foirsyd baksyd heid and feit with twa peices of pandis.
- 'Item ane stand of browne serge courtingis brouderit with foirsyd baksyd heid and feit with twa pices off pandis thairto.
- 'Item ane stand of reid skarlet courtingis brouderit, with foirsyd baksyd heid and feit thrie pices pandes and ye ruiff and ane chyre brouderit to the said bedis.
- 'Item ane stand of counterfuit [imitation] dames courtingis contenyng foirsyd and feit with ane pice of pand pasmentit with counterfuit pasmentis off silwer and gold.

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General Plan of the Castle



Dunnottar Castle. General Plan.

'Item ane stand off grein growgrame courtingis with foirsyd baksyd heid and feit with thrie pices of pandis pasmentit with counterfuit pasmentis off silwer.

'Item of fethir bedis fywe scoir, yairof Flanderis tykis [ticks] twentie sewin.

'Item of bousteris fywe scoir, yairof of Flanderis tykis twentie sewin and yairof tua fustian bousteris.

'Item twa fustiane stickit mattis.

'Item four pair of futtiane blankettis.

'Item off codis [pillows] fywe scoir and ten.' Etc.

It would almost seem as if the plenishing of William of the Tower, who attended Mary to France, and of his son the founder of Marischal College, had to some extent been dispersed by 1660. There is no saying what depredations the soldiers of Cromwell may have committed. It is apparent from the inventories however that every event in the family life had been provided for: witness the black damask suite of curtains, under which, probably, the dead Earls lay before they were carried by the tenants to the Marischal's Aisle in St. Bridget's in state, as we shall see. The earlier inventory contains no mention of carpets or cushions, and Meason returned only four rugges, three carpettis, three pieces of hangings and 'two rowmes hanged,'—which probably accounts for some of the shortages in tapestry. This inventory is more vivid too with regard to other matters. Mention has been made of the Church of St. Ninian. According to the inventory, all the furniture in the church consisted, in 1660, of eight seats and a pulpit. In all probability the church had at one time been richly adorned and furnished, but the covenanting Earl and his band of destroyers had been at work,—as their successors seem to be still, striving to realize the theological fiction called spiritual independence,—long before that year, and left it a venerable but empty barn. Some of the silver mentioned in the inventory of 1612 may have stood on the altar of St. Ninian's. The silver work of 1612 is extremely interesting to read about, but not an ounce of it now exists. What would we not give even to see those basins, tasses, cups and goblets! Here they are:

'Item—twa silwer baissines with thair lawaris [plate or stand?] with yair coweris double ourgilt.

'Item—twa heiche [tall] goblattis of silwer double ourgilt of raisit wark wanting ye coweris.

'Item—ane greit silwer tass with ye cower and ring double ourgilt.

'Item—ane less silwer tass with ye cower and ring double ourgilt.

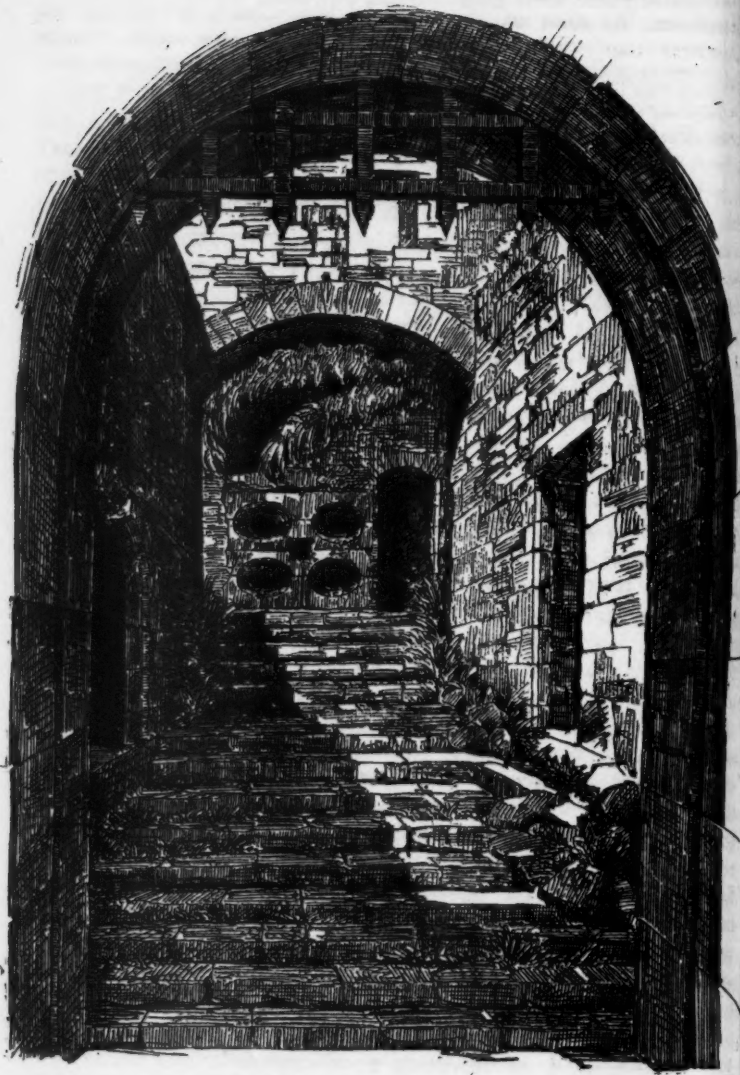
'Item—ane wther silwer coup double ourgilt wantand ye cower.

'Item—twa silwer goblattis double ourgilt and engrawein wantand the coweris.

- 'Item—ane plaine silwer goblet wantand ye cower.
- 'Item—ane flat silwer tass.
- 'Item—ane greit silwer salt fat [vat] contening thrie pices ourgilt.
- 'Item—ane plaine silwer salt fat.
- 'Item—two little silwer salt fattis persuall [parcel] overgilt.
- 'Item—of silwer truncheours twentie-thrie.
- 'Item—of silwer spoynes four dossone.
- 'Item—ane silwer fuit for ane cope [cup] double ourgilt and engrawein.
- 'Item—aine plaine silwer fuit for a cope.
- 'Item—ane maissaris and lipis stalk and fuit yairof off silwer.'

Not one of these is mentioned in the inventory of 1660. It is difficult to believe that a refuge had been found for them elsewhere than in Dunnottar, since the Regalia of Scotland were considered safe within its Tower. Possibly the silver may have been taken out of the Castle. This supposition receives confirmation in a note of plenishing (indorsed '*Some of the Earl's furnishing and goods*'), delivered by the Lady of Cromartie 'unto Master Patrick Falconer for my lord Marshall's use, Januarie the 8th 1658, at Tillibo'; and it affords some further gleams of the interior of the Castle before that date. For instance, there is mentioned an English carpet, and it is said that it is used for a chamber table. Then, there are stands of blue and red, black and green, and orange and white curtains, some of them 'figurata,' some silk, and some velvet. Here, also, we obtain a trace of the household linen and some of the silver, as follows: '3 paire of new walked blankets; 2 pairs of hauding plaids at an eale & half quarter broad every breed (width); 2 pairs of whilling (homespun) plaids of the same bredth; 4 paire of small eale broad linning (linen) sheets; 2 damask table cloaths, with a dozen of damask servets & a damask towel; 2 dornick (?) table cloaths, 2 dornick towels, & 2 dozen of dornick servets; 5 small linning table cloaths, 4 towels, 2 dozen of servits, all linning; an green table cloath for a hall table; an spranged table cloath of all colours for a hall table; an doun bed of Flanders tyking with four down cods of Flanders tyking, with four small lining (linen) waires; an bowle salt fat with four trencher saltfats all silver, a silver cup, an dozen of silver spoons, all weighing four pound wanting an ounce; an covered cup doble ourgilt weighing 9 once; 4 church cushens, 2 of velvet & 2 of damask.'

The details must, however, yield in interest to the personal adornment of the noblemen themselves. Here is an inventory of the 'Robis and Others delyuered be James Thomsoune in



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name of Dame Marie Erskine, Countess Marischaell, to Andrew Hantoune in name of Wam. Erle Mairschaell, hir sone. At Dunottar the 8 day of December 1638 befor thir witness John Hantoune in Dunoter, and John Bisset in Chapiltoune' (a tenant on the estate). It details the Earl's robes for Coronation, Parliament and burials. For the coronation there is one robe—'of rid cramassie veluit lyned wt quheit mertrix and quheit taffietie with jupye huid and crowne conforme, with gold lace.' The Parliament robe is the same except in colour, which is scarlet; and there is mentioned along with it 'the Mairschaell baton with the cover thairof of rid weluit'; and he is also furnished with 'ane fuit mantle for the Parliament, of black welvit with gold laice and freinzie conforme lynd with buckassie'—that is, a black velvet mantle fringed with gold lace and stiffened, and 'ane brydill & bit strip lethers curpell & tie covered with veluit all with gold lace' conform to the foot mantle, and also 'ane embroudered lous (loose) covering of ane saidill (saddle).' Burials seem to have been conducted with more ceremonial than any other function. There were 'thrie crowns for burials, quhairof tua hes rid ueluit capis with ane spuinge conform.' This was for the Earl, and for his four lacqueys 'four coatis of black weluit with arms broudered with gold & siluer, ye back & breist lynd with rid taffietie.' Then there are 'tua cotis of black taffietie for the buriall,' and for the family burials 'the pail (pall) of black weluit with the pands (pans) yairof lynd with taffietie with ane upper and nether freingzie.' 'The mortclaith' was 'of black weluit with ane freingzie round about (stiffened) with buckassie.' There was further 'ane black weluit mortcot with ane freingzie of black & whyte silk and ribans conforme.' And if one of the family or a friend were buried, the Earl wore 'ane murning rob with the jupye craig (throat) peice & huid (hood) conforme,' or 'ane wther murning rob (without jupye craig peice or huid).' Moreover the lacqueys (allacayis) had provided for them on state occasions 'four wther cotis with bars of blew and yallow welvit,' and there were 'ten scheildis with arms for the mortclaith and pail,' while five 'peissis of culors of rid & yellow taffietie with freingzies conforme,' decked out the cavalcade of which the Earl or his corpse was the head and centre in state or funeral processions.

Descending to more trivial matters, the foresaid inventory of 1660 is exact in its miscellaneous specifications. The Earl's

bailies had returned to them by the dispossessed besiegers 'a hanger for towellis, a pair of pothookes, a desk, a brass basine, tenne boxes, an old cloak and bell, a field bedcaise (probably the property of a soldier and not the Earl's at all), two firlots and ane peck, a closet, two close stooles, two brass candlesticks, a paire of smith's bellowes, pieces of gilt hangings, a fence about the garden with a little rowme & table in it, a pistoll (pestle), and mortar, two cusheones, a reid couth, a cloak (clock) with a case, a map, a pewter flagon, a fyre range,' etc. It is also particular in mentioning 'three paire of iron tonges and four chamber-pots.' The latter are the only pieces of crockery we hear of, if they were earthenware, which is doubtful; of pewter dishes there are eight, and of trensher plaites eight. China and glass and forks and knives are not mentioned. And in the inventory it is suspected that many inferior articles had been substituted for the furnishings handed over when Ogilvy surrendered the Castle to Cromwell's troops. The kitchen and wine cellar furnishings bulk largely, as they ought to where English troopers, even Puritans, are concerned; and, accordingly, mention is made of 'cooleris sexteine greate and small, a tunwell, a quilefat (quailvat), a bakeing boord, a naskfatt broken, a racke to hang meat upon, three cowpes for fowles, two pair of irone raxes, two cheise rackes, a worte spute (worts spout for the brewer), a hand mill, a new maskine fatt, a copper (which fatt and copper does not belong to the Earle Marischal bot is sold by the said Captaine to the said Earle for the sowme of fourteine pundis sex shillingis sex pence sterling), a cole rack, a purring iron, a bucket, twenty-one barrellis & tubbis, sex gantries, two pantries, thrie rackes, & mangeris.' The greater part of these were concerned with the brewing, and they are followed by 'nine hundred sleattis and a wooden horse.' The latter contrast strangely, indeed, with the 'Bell to the Chappell, the League and Covenant, a prospective glass and globe, and a broade with theses.' The League and Covenant would probably be the family copy; there is such a copy among the Keith papers now. The 'prospective glass' was used by the look-out on the watch-tower, sitting at the height of more than 200 feet above the sea.

These particulars convey some notion of the kind of establishment the Earls kept throughout the seventeenth century. The castle was more like a village than the dwelling of one family. Retainers and guests were constantly going to and

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fro, and the great storehouse of the family, burned by Montrose, was the Tolbooth at the old pier of Stonehaven, to which the fishers brought wine from France, and from which the Earl's stores were shipped in boats to the Castle about a mile away. No surprise need be felt at the elaborate kitchen arrangements when an army of guests and menials had to be provided for; and they were provided for by what the Earl could draw as rent—speaking of 1700 A.D.—from Dunnottar, Fetteresso, and Garvock, in addition to the money rent, namely, '491 firlots bear, 816 bolls meal, 33 bolls corn and fodder, nearly 1000 hens, 4—2/3rd mairts, 10 stones of butter, 261 capons, 1200 eggs & nine swine.' To provide fire for his kitchen, he could make his tenants draw large leits of peat from the great moss of Cowie or coals from 'Stanehive,' and there were in the Castle twenty fire ranges of enormous width, and two of them had gallowses—that is, sways or gibbets in wide fire-places, on which, no doubt, many more than the eight or nine pots and pans mentioned in the inventory of 1660 hung and cooked the victuals.

Then sanitary arrangements had to be made. The latrines were at the verge of the cliff, and there are traces of jakes in several places. The water supply was a most interesting piece of engineering. When visitors used long ago to be conducted over the Castle, the keeper, known as Jamie Smith, originally a Stonehaven fisherman, of enormous proportions and good hardy features, used hypocritically to say in describing the Covenanters suffering in the dungeon, that the 'puir craters didna get a drap o' water till the gweed Gode birsed it thro' the rock.' Jamie said this with his tongue in his cheek. The water came through interstices in the rock from the vast well in the quadrangle, about 30 feet in diameter and as deep. It is really a small reservoir shaped like the half of an egg. The water reached it in this way. St. Ninian's Well is in the little ravine leading from the highway between Bervie and Stonehaven down to the Castle. A pipe, probably wooden, was laid from the well to a barrel well on the top of the cliff opposite the entrance of the Castle, just where the road begins to dip towards the shore before ascending again to the Castle gate. From this barrel well, pipes, wooden or leaden, were led, either by way of the Castle gate or in some other way, to the reservoir, which is at a lower level, and in this way the Castle had always an abundant supply of water. A curious confirmation of this exists

in the following extract from the Register of the Privy Council, dated Edinburgh, 8th January 1607, which shows the Earl of that date, learned and distinguished though he was, in a not too favourable light:

'Complaint to the Council by David Andirsoun, plumber, burgess of Abirdene, against George, Earl of Merchell, as follows: "The said parties entered into a contract whereby Andirsoun was bound to lay a pipe of lead from the meadow beneath the stables to the great well be-cast the 'galrie' within the Castle of Dunnottar to serve 'ane fontane.' Accordingly, he bought 160 stone weight of lead, and carried the same to the burgh of Abirdene, and thence to the said Castle, at great expense. He and his workmen at great trouble cast one day five pipes, each 14 ells in length, and were most willing to finish the work. But the said Earl, on 25th April 1603, after the completing of the first day's work, apprehended the complainer, and detained him in ward in the said Castle for four days 'bosting and minassing me to discharge and annull the said contract. And, efter that I obtenit libertie and fredome, I repairit hame to the burgh of Abirdene to attend and await upoun my lauchfull trade, and havinge tane jorney fra the said burgh to the burgh of Edinburgh be sey [by sea] and being bestorme of wedder and contrarious windis dryvene bak and forcit for saultie of my lyff to land at the Stanehaven, quhair I resolvit to repair be land to the said burgh of Edinburgh, upoun the sevint of May thairefter, I being gangand in peciable and quiet manner upoun my foote to the said toun of Stanehaven, lippyning for na harme nor oppressioun to have been offerit to me, it is of treuth that the said Erl in propre persone, accompanyt with Keith of Duffus, and James Stirling, then his servand, followit me on horsebak out of the said toun, and at the end thair of they tuke and apprehendit me, and tuk me perforce with thame to the said Castell, keipit and detenit me thairintill as prisoner, and on na wyse wald put me to libertie quhill I wes constrainit to deliver to him ane grite quantitie of leid.' This, worth £700, with the other lead and pipes, worth £300, the said Earl disposed at his pleasure. The Earl also compelled the complainer to deliver to him a discharge of the said lead and contract. The Earl has thus not only committed 'ane manifest rye and oppressioun upon me,' 'but thairwithall usurpit upoun him his Majestie's princelie power and authoritie in taking and detening of me as prisoner, I being his Heynes fre subject, answerable and obedient to the lawis, haveing commitit na cryme nor offence, nor he haveing na power nor commissioun to tak me; and thairfore he aucht to be persewit and punishit in his persone and guidis with all rigour to the terrour of utheris.' The pursuer therefore humbly beseeches that the defender be charged to compare and produce the discharge above written in order to its being declared null as having been unlawfully given."

The complaint is indorsed 'Fiat ut petitur,' the decree being subscribed by the Bishop of Dunkeld, but what ensued afterwards does not appear.

This brings one to the last point of interest for the present. The Castle was not merely his dwelling place; it was a fortress; and dominated a large tract of country. Speaking of The

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Mearns only, even in 1700 the best part of Dunnottar, Garwock and Fetteresso was still in the possession of the Earl. Dunnottar was a fortress throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The first keep had in the course of time given place to others of an even stronger description; and, as habits became more refined and the exigencies of life demanded, the keep was gradually surrounded by more luxurious structures. The rock is peninsulated, unscalable from the sea and also from the small portion abutting upon



Keep of Dunnottar Castle from the South East.

the land. Access on foot or horseback but not by vehicle was got by ascending a steep slope in the neighbouring cliffs by a winding pathway, which at the foot of the rock is causewayed, and thence by a causewayed ascent to the entrance through an arched gateway flanked by guard-rooms. One of these guard houses is fifty feet high, and commands the entrance by innumerable embrasures for the use of arms in the thick walls. Eight feet from the gate was the portcullis, the groove of which remains; and further on a guard house faced the gateway with four circular holes for arms in the wall. Near this is the magazine, and following the outer and inner sally ports scooped out of the rock and the latter of which

was roofed and surmounted by ordnance, the plateau is reached. A shorter way to the right led up to the central keep, the south wall of which rests on a precipice 150 feet high. Abutting on the keep or tower are the remains of the ancient offices, such as the blacksmith's forge and the armourer's shop. These last mentioned buildings doubtless formed the ancient Castle. The other structures, excepting the church—which remained after the appropriation of the surface by Sir William Keith as before mentioned,—had been added later. The later buildings, forming a sort of quadrangle reaching the seaward cliff, comprised apartments which tradition names the ballroom, dining-room, drawing-room, dressing-rooms, and bedrooms, and an elaborate suite of what might be called kitchen accommodation, including pantries, brew-house, bake-house, cellars, and the like. Looking out upon the sea were the private rooms of the Earl and Countess, not far from the celebrated Whigs' Vault and the dungeon below it, where Covenanters and anti-Covenanters, the Earl's prisoners, and malefactors from Aberdeen in turn were immured. A bowling green is indicated by an area of sward which is smoother than the rest. Detached towers, like Benholm's Tower and Waterton's Lodging were occupied by cadets of the family. The ancient church was surrounded by a churchyard, and the earliest recorded burial is that of Thomas Roslyne, a knight in the service of Edward I.

But how was Dunnottar defended? We have the following list of cannon in the inventory of 1612; it is doubtful if there were so many in any single fortress in Scotland except Edinburgh and Stirling. They are called 'Artalzerie':

'Item—in the first at the zet (gate) lyand within ye wall twa heid stickis of irne with yair chalmeris.

'Item—mair at the northe pairt of the place bezond the gabriones ane great kalice irne peice.

'Item—ane long braisson pice kairtit (mounted) and stokit.

'Item—ane half falkone of brass.

'Item—ane wther litle peice of brass kairtit.

'Item—ane irne peice.

'Item—ane wther peice of irne.

'Item—in the long wolt (vault) of litle braissen peices four. (This long vault faced the portcullis or gate inside.)

'Item—at the colt chalmer ane greit irne peice kairtit.

'Item—ane haill falkone and ane half falknoe of brass.

'Item—on the mount heid abowe the pend (sally-port) twa irne peices.

'Item—ane number of yrne bullotis.'

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Such were the ordnance, including 'Muckle Meg and her seven sisters,' with which the Castle was defended, and which the Earls occasionally converted into moveable batteries and lugged about with them in their military expeditions. For example, they were moved from the Castle and used with great effect at the Raid of Stanehive, as Spalding records. They were used against Cromwell's troops encamped on the Black hill half a mile to the north. The Castle was taken by them mainly on account of the Regalia having been sent to Dunnottar for safety, and the inventory of 1660 mentions amongst the articles delivered up by order of Morgan to Keith of Whytriggs, 'Imprimis, of cannon and murdering peices mounted and dismounted twenty-four.' Only seventeen are detailed in the list of 1612. The artillery was probably made in Flanders. Certainly, it was mended there. In a letter, dated March 6, 1571, of Lord Darcy to Burghley, printed in the *Calendar of Documents* relating to Scotland, Darcy mentions that there is a Scottish ship at Harwich and she has on board two double bases and two single bases of iron without any chambers, belonging to the Earl Marischal, which have been mended in Flanders. While personal decorations and military munitions are elaborately set forth in this inventory, what we should in these days desire to know more about are dismissed in this summary manner: 'Item, ye haill timber wark within the places and housses of Dunnottar, Fetteresso and Hall Forrest; item, ye haill buikis and armour within the said housses.' The docquet above quoted contains an apology that everything had been particularly set forth except 'ye timber wark, buikis & armour,' but it is promised that the inventory of these 'salbe particularlie takin up & set down heirefter,' but this was never done. Such being the splendour of this family and its appointments, well might the founder of Marischal College, in contempt of depreciating gossip, put above the gateway:

'They haf said : what say they : lat them say.'

J. CRABB WATT.

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