

## 17. Architecture—(a) Ecclesiastical.

The earliest Celtic examples of ecclesiastical architecture were dry-built stone cells with a roof closed with overlapping stones and flag-stones. These were followed by the Columban Scottish churches, consisting of one small oblong chamber with one door and one window. No ornamentation was used until the Romanesque influence made itself felt, introduced by the Normans. The type was elaborated later by the addition of a chancel.

The Celtic structures were superseded by churches of Norman style, introduced in the twelfth century. This style is characterised chiefly by simple massive forms and semicircular arches. As a rule there is little ornament except in the doorways, the arches of which are

moulded, and into which zigzag or bird's-head ornamentation is introduced. Very few good examples of this style exist in Scotland, but parts of the cathedrals of Dunblane and Kirkwall, and the abbey of Dunfermline exhibit it very well.

The round Norman arch was replaced by the pointed arch, giving the First Pointed Style, which reached Scotland in the thirteenth century. Fresh ornamentation was introduced, showing itself in mouldings and in vigorous foliage. The windows were always pointed, narrow and lofty, and an effect of greater spaciousness combined with lightness was aimed at. In Scotland the style was not so pure as in England or France, as round Norman forms lingered on, especially in doorways, although the general style was altered. This period is well exemplified in parts of Paisley Abbey.

From the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century, the Middle Pointed or Decorated Style prevailed in Scotland. The details aimed at a still lighter effect. The windows were enlarged, the tracery became more ornate, and the vaulting and buttresses were made lighter. Perhaps the finest example of the style in Scotland is Melrose Abbey. The nave of Glasgow Cathedral is also a good fourteenth century example of the Decorated Style.

The transition to the Third Pointed Style was gradual. In England the tracery became more rigid, and the windows were carried up in straight lines so that the style was called Perpendicular. In Scotland the exterior is generally marked by rather heavy buttresses, terminating

in small pinnacles. The semicircular arch is often used and there is a revival of early ornamentation. Most of the examples are not cathedrals but collegiate churches.

There is very little undoubted Norman work in Renfrewshire. Part of the masonry of the old church of St Fillan's may date back as far as Norman times,



Paisley Abbey

although most of the church was certainly built at a much later period. Architecturally the reputation of the county rests mainly on the beautiful Abbey of Paisley. It was founded in the twelfth century by Walter the first Steward, who brought monks from Shropshire, his native county, and settled them first in Renfrew and afterwards in Paisley. The monastery, created an abbey in the

thirteenth century, was so enriched by the generosity of the Stewarts that it became one of the wealthiest and most powerful houses in Scotland. The first buildings were destroyed by the English seven years before the Battle of Bannockburn. Most of the existing structure was built in the fifteenth century by Abbot Thomas Tervas and Abbot George Shaw. The former "wes ane richt gud man. The body of the kirk fra the bucht stair up he biggit, and put on the ruf and theekit it with sclats, and riggit it with stane." Abbot George Shaw added to the buildings, and in addition surrounded the Abbey and grounds with a fine stone wall, which remained almost entire, till in 1781 the Earl of Abercorn sold the stones for house building. A stone still exists on which may be read the inscription :

Thei callit ye Abbot Georg of Schawe,  
 About yis Abbay gart mak yis waw;  
 A thousand four hundreth 3heyr  
 Auchty and fyve the date hit ueir.  
 Pray for his salvatioun  
 That made this noble fundacioun.

The attempts to erect a tower on the Abbey were unfortunate. The first tower fell, probably because of its insecure foundations. Abbot Hamilton rebuilt it at great expense, but this tower too came crashing down, destroying in its fall the choir of the Abbey. According to one account it was struck by lightning, but Hamilton of Wishaw states that it fell by its own weight. We have already seen that the Reformation brought disaster to the old Abbey. In 1557 a body of Reformers drove

out the monks, sacked the building, and "burnt all the ymages and ydols and popish stuff in the same."

Most of the Abbey belongs to the Late Pointed Period. The east part of the south side of the nave, however, is undoubtedly older. The doorway here is in the Transition style, and exhibits the persistence of Norman influence. The arch head is not pointed but rounded, and has numerous bold mouldings. Above this door are three simple pointed windows which seem to be Early First Pointed work. This part of the building probably dates from the first half of the thirteenth century. To this century also must be ascribed the western doorway, a single pointed and deeply recessed opening. The upper portion of this part of the building, however, is certainly of later date, and was probably added when the abbey was restored in the fifteenth century. The north and the south transepts are in ruins, but the north wall exists with a fine traceried window which has recently been restored. The design of the triforium is very remarkable. It consists of large segmental arches which spring from clusters of piers introduced between them. To some extent it resembles the triforium of the nave of Dunkeld Cathedral, but the Paisley work is superior in style and seems of earlier date.

The Chapel of St Mirin is on the south side and is known also as the Sounding Aisle. It gets this name from the wonderful echo, which is described in great detail by Pennant in his *Tour*. "The echo is the finest in the world. When the end door is gently shut the noise is equal to a loud peal of thunder. If a good voice



sings, or a musical instrument is well played on, the effect is inexpressibly fascinating, and almost of a celestial character. But the effect of a variety of instruments playing in concert is transcendently enchanting, and excites such emotions in the soul as to baffle the most vivid description." It is hardly necessary to state that Pennant's command of adjectives is greater than his accuracy, or else the echo has weakened much in its old age. The chief object of interest in the chapel is "Queen Bleary's" tomb. It was found lying in fragments near the Abbey and was put together in 1817. The recumbent figure on the tomb is believed to represent Marjory, the only daughter of Robert the Bruce, and the mother of Robert II, who was killed by a fall from her horse between Paisley and Renfrew. Another person prominent in history, to whom a memorial is erected in the Abbey, is Sir Alan Cathcart, a faithful companion of the Bruce, and one of the knights who set sail for the Holy Land with the heart of the king. The Cathcart pillar, one of the south piers of the nave, bears the arms of the house of Cathcart in memory probably of Sir Alan.

The Abbey remained in a wretched state of disrepair until the second half of the nineteenth century. "In 1859 a more dreary place of worship it was impossible to conceive. It was like a charnel house. The burial ground outside reached above the sill of the windows. The floor was earthen and you were afraid if you stirred your foot you would rake up some old bones that lay uncomfortably near the surface." Since that time the

church has been greatly restored, and at the present time it is one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in the west of Scotland. The part of the Abbey now in use contains a number of fine stained glass windows.

The Abbey of Paisley dwarfs in comparison the importance of all the other ecclesiastical buildings of Renfrewshire, but some of the others present features of interest. The Castle Sempole Collegiate Church is remarkable in some respects. The building stands on gently sloping ground overlooking the calm waters of Castle Sempole Loch. The first Lord Sempill founded a collegiate church on this spot in 1504. The style of the east end of the church is very unusual. It contains double windows, the forms of which indicate that they are late survivals of spurious Gothic work. The style of the east end seems to stamp it as a later sixteenth century addition. The square tower at the west end is extremely simple and has no analogy with the work at the other end of the church. The church contains a large monument to Lord Sempill, who fell at the Battle of Flodden. The style of the tomb shows the influence of Renaissance forms on the earlier Gothic. This is well exhibited in the foliage of the upper part which is luxuriant to the point of exaggeration.

Between Houston and Kilmacolm in the rich valley of Strathgryfe stand the ruins of the old church of St Fillan's. The walls are fairly well preserved but the gables are in ruins. Part of the walls may date back as far as Norman times, but the openings show work

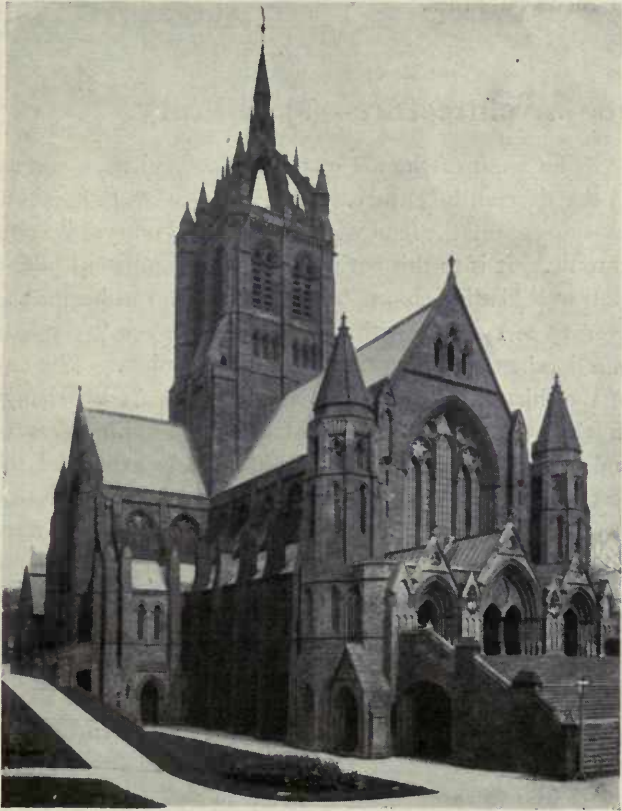


Auld Kirk, Lochwinnoch



of a much later period, a doorway in the south wall being dated 1635. At Kilmacolm there is part of the wall of an old church which may possibly belong to the thirteenth century. There are three plain lancet windows the work on which is certainly of an early date.

The Reformation put an end to medieval ecclesiastical architecture in Scotland. A few churches were certainly erected under the influence of the Episcopalians, but the Presbyterians attempted to eliminate everything that savoured of the old forms, and to this end were content to erect buildings that had absolutely no claim to respect so far as their architecture was concerned. In the eighteenth century, however, there arose in England a distinct revival of the interest in architecture, and particularly in classical styles. This feeling hardly stirred in Scotland till the nineteenth century. We are told that in the eighteenth century the Scottish churches "were disgraces to art and scandals to religion. They were mean, incommodious and comfortless; the earth of the graveyard often rose high above the floor of the church, so that the people required to descend several steps as to a cellar, before they got entrance by stooping into the dark, dismal, damp and hideous sanctuaries." At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, a great change for the better began to take place. Architects made a special study of old buildings and old styles, and this combined with the rapidly increasing wealth of the country was soon reflected in many noble ecclesiastical buildings. The great and wealthy industrial communities



Coats Memorial Church, Paisley

of Renfrewshire can now without exception boast of modern churches that will bear comparison with those of medieval times.

## 18. Architecture—(b) Military.

The finest of the old castles of Scotland were erected in the thirteenth century. The nobles were rich, labour was cheap, and the feud with England had not yet become chronic. It is to this period that the magnificent pile of Bothwell Castle belongs, with walls 60 feet in height and over 15 feet thick, with towers, a chapel, a great hall, and dominating everything, the grand donjon. The end of the thirteenth century, however, marks a great change in the style of the castles of Scotland. The War of Independence against England completely exhausted the resources of the country, and consequently we find that large and massive buildings such as Bothwell Castle were no longer erected. Their place was taken by strong, square towers, simply fashioned after the model of the Norman keeps. These are the castles of the second period. They are specially characteristic of the fourteenth century, but continued to be built at much later dates, and from the simplicity of the design it is often difficult to determine the exact age.

In the fifteenth century the plan was slightly elaborated. The simple, square, keep-like style was retained, but the castle was built round a central quadrangle or courtyard. In addition a separate tower or keep is often

found, capable of being defended although the rest of the castle should be captured. These are the third period castles, and most of the Renfrewshire structures are examples of this class. All the castles built in the reign of James I and until that of James V are of the modified keep style. All this time, however, the defensive features were becoming less in evidence while domestic requirements were demanding more consideration. Thus we find that what was originally a necessary feature of successful defence became later merely ornamental, and thus also while the thick walls were retained they were honeycombed with chambers. There are several good examples in the county of the castles of the third period.

Life in these castles was simple to the point of rudeness. The floors were strewn with rushes, and even in the bedroom of the king, grass was used in place of our carpets. The table and the side-board were the chief articles of furniture. Forks were unknown; their introduction in the seventeenth century was described with indignation as "an insult to Providence, who had given us fingers." Glass was costly and was little used. Even King Henry III had but one glass cup which had been given him as a present. When a noble moved from one castle to another he carried his valuable windows with him, and set them up in his next residence. The food if plentiful was coarse; the manners not less so. In early times a guest who sat in a place more honourable than his due was liable to be pelted by the company with bones, as a hint to seek a position more suited to his rank.

There are no ruins of castles of the first period in

Renfrew. None of the existing structures can be compared in size and magnificence with such a fine example of the first period type as Bothwell Castle. Of the castles of the second period, the simple Norman keep, Duchal Castle is the only well-known example. It was built on a rocky knoll with precipitous sides. A strong wall enclosed part of the knoll, and from one corner there rises suddenly for 20 feet a rock on which the castle was built. The structure is now a shapeless ruin, too dilapidated for satisfactory results to be obtained from its examination.

From the point of view of the antiquary or the architect, Mearns Castle is one of the most important in Scotland, for its date of erection is known exactly, and therefore it forms a standard by the help of which the age of other castles of the same kind may be approximately fixed. In 1449 James II granted a license to Herbert, Lord Maxwell, "to build a castle or fortalice on the Barony of Mearns in Renfrewshire, to surround and fortify it with walls and ditches, to strengthen it by iron gates, and to erect on the top of it all warlike apparatus necessary for its defence." Most of the castles of this style and period in Scotland are quite undated, so that authentic information of this kind is of the highest value. About the middle of the seventeenth century the castle and lands were sold by the Earl of Nithsdale (Lord Maxwell) to Sir George Maxwell of Nether Pollok, and shortly afterwards they passed into the hands of the ancestors of the present owner, Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart.

Leven Castle stands near the shore a mile or two south



of Gourock, and commands a magnificent view across the Firth of Clyde. It is built on the plan of a double tower, a very unusual design for the period to which it belongs. It seems probable that a keep of the usual fourteenth or fifteenth century type was first erected, and later, about



Crookston Castle

the beginning of the sixteenth century, another wing was added. Until the middle of the sixteenth century the lands belonged to the Mortons. Then they passed into the hands of the Sempills, and now they are in the possession of the Shaw Stewarts. A mile farther down the firth is Inverkip Castle on the site of an old stronghold

that stood on this spot in the days of Bruce and which is mentioned by Barbour. The ruins of a square tower are all that is left of the subsequent building which was erected probably towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Crookston Castle is in many respects one of the most interesting ruins in the county. It is situated on the summit of a slope some three miles east of Paisley, and forms a conspicuous feature of the landscape. In its best days the castle must have been an imposing structure, with two lofty towers, massive walls, and battlemented wings. It is surrounded by a mound and a great ditch in a wonderfully fine state of preservation. In the twelfth century the estate belonged to Robert de Croc, one of the companions of Walter the first Steward. Later it passed into the hands of the Stewarts of Darnley, and was held by Lord Darnley, the husband of Queen Mary. Here tradition says their betrothal took place, and here they spent the days succeeding their marriage. From this spot also Queen Mary is said to have viewed the Battle of Langside :

“And one bright female form with sword and crown,  
Still grieves to view her banners beaten down.”

Both Wilson and Scott go astray on this point, for rising ground intervenes between Crookston and Langside. In reality Mary watched the final ruin of her hopes from the summit of a knoll near Cathcart Castle. Crookston is celebrated in the verses of Burns, Tannahill, Wilson, and many other poets of lesser note.

Barr Castle south of Lochwinnoch is another of the

third period structures, and is in a fine state of preservation. In plan it is a simple parallelogram enclosing a central quadrangle. Entrance to the courtyard is obtained by a round arched doorway defended with shot-holes. For purposes offensive and defensive there are slits for arrows



Cathcart Castle

and ports for guns. Battlements extend all round the castle, and the corner turrets were originally roofed. Its date of erection was probably the beginning of the sixteenth century. Cathcart Castle was a stronghold in the days of Wallace and Bruce, but the present building is of fifteenth century style. It stands on the steep bank of the White

Cart, which defends it on two sides. It was inhabited till about 1740 when it was partly demolished for building material so that only one ruined ivy-mantled tower remains. At the foot of the Gleniffer Braes there is a little lake forming a reservoir for Paisley, and mirrored in its bright waters is the hoary, corbelled tower of Stanely, sung by Tannahill :

“Keen blaws the wind o'er the braes o' Gleniffer,  
The auld castle turrets are covered wi' snaw,  
How changed frae the time when I met wi' my lover  
Amang the broom bushes on Stanley green shaw.”

The Danzielstons are said to have built a keep here in the fourteenth century, but the style of the castle indicates a later date. It was perhaps built by the Maxwells in the fifteenth century.

With the fourth period there is a marked break in the continuity of the style of architecture. The introduction of Renaissance forms is obvious in the frequent use of florid ornament in place of the Gothic severity. The change was facilitated by the union of England and Scotland in 1603. The use of artillery rendered an impregnable stronghold impossible. Thus we find that while the plan of the building remained the same, the external appearance and the details were altered. The transition from military to domestic needs is shown in such a change as the evolution of angle turrets into bow windows, a change which is typical of the whole process. Newark Castle, Port Glasgow, belongs to the fourth period, and is one of the finest specimens of seventeenth century architecture in Scotland. It is built round a courtyard,



forming three sides of a quadrangle open to the south. The hall is a splendid apartment nearly 40 feet long, and is lighted by windows on both sides. The keep dates from the end of the fifteenth century, but most of the castle is more than a century younger. The doorway



Stanely Castle

shows clearly the encroaching of Renaissance details on the old Scottish design. Above it is the inscription "The blessingis of God be heirin." Hags Castle is another fine example of the same period. It was built about the same time as Newark to which it shows many points of similarity, particularly the general richness of



effect. Sir John Maxwell of Pollok was its builder, and its erection seems to have overtaxed his resources, for he wrote in 1587 to his father-in-law that his house was nearly finished but wanted furnishing "whilk is na lytell mater." He is ashamed that his home "sowld stand lyk ane twme kirne."

### 19. Architecture — (c) Municipal and Domestic.

Paisley can boast of finer public buildings than any other town in Renfrewshire. The Municipal Buildings are nearly a hundred years old, and form an interesting, castellated pile with projecting hexagonal turrets. The County Buildings and the Sheriff Court House are two very fine buildings in the Italian style. The most conspicuous structure in Paisley apart from the Abbey is undoubtedly the George A. Clark Town Hall, one of the most magnificent public halls in Scotland. It cost £100,000 to build, the money being given by members of the Clark family, the famous manufacturers of thread. The architecture is Greek, and from all quarters the building has a most imposing appearance. Nor is the other great thread family of Paisley unrepresented. The fine public library and museum was presented by the late Sir Peter Coats, while his brother continued the good work by erecting the well-known observatory of Paisley. Probably no other town in Britain has received such handsome benefactions from but two families. For a

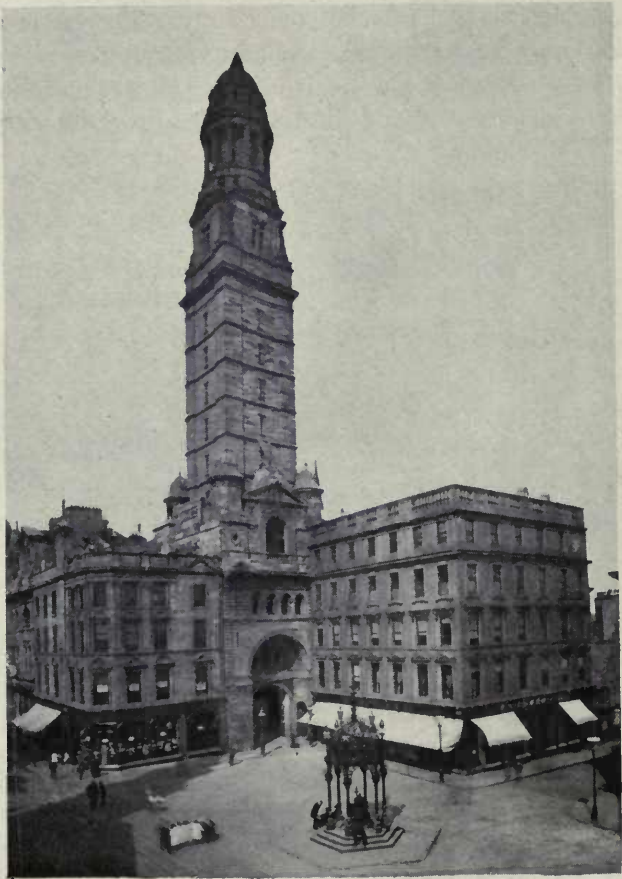
single edifice the Municipal Buildings of Greenock probably hold the palm for the county. They form a stately pile of Renaissance architecture, surmounted by a fine dome-capped tower. It is interesting to remember that the former town buildings on the same site were



Dunn Square and Clark Halls, Paisley

designed by the father of James Watt. The town hall of Renfrew is a pretentious building, impure Gothic in style. Although by no means unimposing, the building is not admired by architects (see p. 148).

Although many of the mansion houses of Renfrewshire are fine specimens of architecture, it may be said with



Municipal Buildings, Greenock

truth that the outstanding feature of the great estates is the beauty of the grounds. Pollok House, the seat of the Maxwells, for example, though internally handsome is externally severe, not to say ugly, but the surpassing beauty of the surroundings would redeem a much plainer structure. Similarly Blythswood House, while handsome



Blythswood House, Renfrew

and commodious, draws its chief charm from its magnificently wooded park. Hawkhead House near Paisley is one of the most interesting mansions in the county. Originally a tower it was greatly enlarged in the time of Charles I, and received a visit from James VII when Duke of York. It was repaired again in the eighteenth century, and is now a picturesquely irregular old pile with

beautiful gardens and a fine park. Ardgowan House, the seat of the Shaw Stewarts at Inverkip, is not only a fine mansion, but has a magnificent position, sheltered behind by splendid trees, in front overlooking the glorious panorama of the Firth of Clyde. Erskine House is an imposing specimen of Tudor architecture, but it is difficult to know whether to admire most the splendid mansion, or the finely



Old Houses at Renfrew Cross

wooded grounds surrounding it, or the rich and varied prospect that it overlooks. One of the most picturesque of all the mansions of Renfrewshire is Pollok Castle. It crowns an eminence near the Balgray Reservoir, and commands a magnificent view up and down the Clyde valley, with Ben Lomond and other Highland giants looming blue in the distance.



The richness of Renfrew in even-grained sandstone or freestone has led to most of the buildings in the county being constructed of that stone. Good Giffnock stone is probably more durable than the red sandstones of south Scotland, but in recent years the imperious demands of fashion have brought about the surprising result that stone is brought all the way from Dumfries to within a mile of quarries unsurpassed in all Scotland. There is abundant brick-clay in the low parts of the shire bordering the Clyde, but it has been little used for domestic architecture until recently. Within the last few years, however, large numbers of cottages and small villas have been built of brick coated with rough-cast. The volcanic rocks of the county are sometimes utilised for houses. The result is certainly durable enough, but the stone is too hard and difficult to work ever to come into common use.