

## ROSSLYN CHAPEL

**F**ROM all over the world visitors come to this Chapel. Why do they come? Because its fame is world-wide. It is one of the most remarkable churches in existence. Truth and Beauty, Poetry and Imagination are here enshrined in stone in a Sanctuary dedicated to the service of the Most High. It is so unique, so original, so unlike anything either before or after it, it conforms to neither contemporary architecture nor to any fashion. Rich in ornament beyond compare, its exact place in the creations of mankind still remains difficult to estimate. Little wonder that visitors arrive full of enthusiasm, eulogy, and high hopes, and thoughtfully depart "lost in wonder, love and praise," marvelling at the love that inspired its Founder, and the overwhelming enthusiasm, resourcefulness of spirit, and vision of its builders and craftsmen. To have seen Beauty, Truth, even for a moment, is to make life immortal.

Is it a purely Scottish piece of work? Opinions differ. Foreign influence is clear—Portuguese and Spanish and Burgundian, and you would need to go to St. Radegonde at Poitiers or Genoa for the proposed nave arrangement. This is not surprising in view of the close interchange of art and culture between Scotland and the Continent of Europe in those early centuries. One writer (Fergusson—"Handbook of Architecture") goes so far as to say, "There can be no doubt the architects came from the North of Spain," because he discovered some characteristics prevalent in the Continent—the churches of Burgos and Oviedo, for instance, and that "the tunnel vault of the roof with only transverse ribs is such as those found in almost all the old churches in the south of France."

“The art (architecture) of this Chapel is in no sense whatever Scottish, and we must look probably to Portugal as the country of whose art it is an example.” So we read in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Architecture,” by Professor T. H. Lewis and G. E. Street, R.A. As the work was to be unique in character, and elaborate in detail, no doubt the best workmen that could be obtained were brought from France, Italy, Spain and Portugal; although we need not leave out the craftsmen for which Scotland was famous, many of whom would be employed at Rosslyn. The finest specimen of a Scottish medieval Hall—that at Linlithgow Palace, built by James I, is without any trace of Southern influence, and when Rosslyn Chapel was being built there were two Scots sculptors in the service of the Duke of Burgundy.

Rosslyn Chapel is essentially Scottish in character, but with a richness in detail and exuberance of carving not found elsewhere. Scottish features are seen in the window jambs and arches, bases of pillars, string courses, figure canopies on the buttresses, square-headed doorways and lines of window tracery. Sir Daniel Wilson said, “It is altogether a mistake to regard the singularly interesting Church of Rosslyn, which even the critic enjoys while he condemns as an exotic produced by foreign skill. Its counterparts will be more easily found in Scotland than in any other part of Europe.” (“Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland.”) And the writer of the “Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland” remarks that “it draws on the riches of almost every phase of Gothic architecture except that which was contemporaneously present in England. A similarity in certain respects to the 14th century Glasgow Cathedral has also been commented upon.

So you see Critics do not agree. In architecture as in all Art there will always be diversity of opinion: and each of us is entitled to his own opinion. Rosslyn Chapel has a beauty of its own, effective in composition, fine proportions, good lines, arresting in its bold originality, a veritable “Church of the Holy Grail.” More to be desired than all architectural details is its

ancient sanctified beauty, so that the pilgrim as he enters is one with the Psalmist in the thought:

“ How lovely is thy dwelling-place,  
O Lord of hosts, to me!  
The tabernacles of thy grace,  
How pleasant, Lord, they be! ”

### ENTERING THE GROUNDS

As we enter the Gate of the Chapel grounds we observe that over it is a massive carving of a Coronet and a Helmet and Shield. This together with the jambs and lintel came from the ruins of the Castle nearby. On the inside over the gate was an incised slab lying lengthwise, inscribed “ William de Sincler ” surrounding a floriated cross and sword. This stone has now found a more secure resting-place in the Crypt. It was found in the churchyard of an earlier church, of date unknown.

Lifting our eyes we at once become conscious of the venerable appearance of the Chapel with its rich, mellow colouring, and it is not surprising that this northern side finds favour by artists, and all who are appreciative of the artistic setting and scene.

What we see before us on this ridge of rising ground called the College Hill that slopes down to the River Esk, is but a part—the Choir only—of what was originally intended to be THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEW, not a large church, but a fair-sized sanctuary in the form of a cross, with a lofty tower in the centre, but which was never completed, in consequence of the death of the Founder in 1484. As a Collegiate Church there were to be on the foundation a Provost, six Prebendaries and two choristers or singing-boys. The building of Collegiate Churches for the spread of spiritual and intellectual truth was a noteworthy feature of that age in Scottish history, no fewer than thirty of such Churches, many of them with schools attached, being founded in the period from the capture of the young James I by King Henry IV in

1406 till the death of King James IV at Flodden Field in 1513. It was indeed a great age of Scottish architecture both religious and secular, and in these days when so few specimens remain, we are fortunate in having such splendid examples as those of Rosslyn Chapel and Rosslyn Castle.

### THE FOUNDER

Who founded the Church? Sir William St. Clair (commonly Sinclair), third and last Prince or Earl of Orkney, a great man, cultured, intellectual, representative of the highest society, surnamed "Prodigus," Knight of the Cockle and Golden Fleece, who lived during the reigns of the Scottish Kings—James I, II and III.

When the St. Clairs took the name of Rosslyn, or when they became possessed of the estate is unknown; but it is believed that the estate or barony of Rosslyn, and perhaps the Castle, also, were possessed of a family who were called "of Roslyn" or "Roskelyn" long before the St. Clairs appeared.

Who is our authority regarding the family? The answer is Richard Augustine Hay, whom we mentioned in the Introduction. His mother, Dame Jean Spottiswood, daughter of Sir Henry Spottiswood, High Sheriff of Dublin, Master of the Green Cloth, was grandniece of Archbishop Spottiswood, Church Historian ("The Church of Scotland" A.D. 203-1625), and widow of George Hay, son of Sir John Hay, Lord Register. She married Sir James St. Clair of Rosslyn, who died in 1699. Richard was born in 1661, baptised in The Tron Church, Edinburgh, by Dr. Wm. Annan, attended school at Edinburgh, Dalkeith, Traquair, and when his mother married a second time was "tossed up and down till at length he was sent to France about 1673-4, and there thrust into the Scots College for the poor scholars of Grisy," where he began his studies. He went to Chartres and "settled himself pensioner in ane ancient Abbacie of Canon Regulars, where he finished his rhetoric as he had done other parts of his

grammar at Paris." He became Canon at St. Genevieve, Paris, 1678, and in 1685 Priest in the Chapel of the Palace of Chartres. The Abbot of St. Genevieve gave him a Commission in 1686 for establishing in England and Scotland the Canon Regulars, and he returned to Scotland. He tells of the landing of the Prince of Orange, the Meeting of the Estates in Edinburgh, 14th March, 1689, and the "Act for approving the address made by the Noblemen and Gentlemen to King William containing just thanks for delivering them from the imminent encroachments on the laws, fundamental constitutions, and from the near dangers which threatened the overturning of the Protestant religion," regarding all of which Father Hay writes in the "Genealogie of the Hayes of Tweeddale," which includes Memoirs of his own times. We learn that he was on intimate terms with Lord Auchinleck, father of James Boswell (1740-95), biographer of Samuel Johnson. Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, representative of the ancient family of that name, became an Advocate in 1729 and was raised to the bench as Lord Auchinleck in 1754; he died in 1782 at the age of 76; and as Father Hay died in the Cowgate of Edinburgh in 1735-6 "embittered by penury," it may have been with young Alexander Boswell, the Advocate, he was acquainted. ("The Auchinleck Chronicle.")

Father Hay made examination of the historical records and Family Charters of the St. Clair family, and completed his manuscript writings in three folio volumes about the year 1700. These I have examined in the National Library, Edinburgh. Part of them was published in 1835, edited by James Maidment, under the title "A Genealogie of the Sainteclaires of Rosslyn, including the Chartulary of Rosslyn." This I have also perused. The book is scarce as only twelve large paper copies and 108 small paper copies were published. The original Charters were later accidentally burned, so that it was well that Father Hay's work was completed before this took place. From this history we learn that the family descended from one Woldonius or Wildernus, who took the name of Saint Claire from

the place where his estate was situated in France. As "Earl of Saint Clair" he married a daughter of Richard, Duke of Normandy, father of William the Conqueror, and their son William St. Clair — "William de Sancto Claro, second son of Waldernus Compte de St. Claro," surnamed for his fair deportment "The Seemly St. Clair" came to England with the Conqueror, and fought in the Battle of Hastings, 1066. After this many from Normandy and England came to Scotland, lured thither by the grants of land which Malcolm Canmore was wont to bestow upon those who fled to him from William's tyranny, or who sympathised with the fortunes of Edgar Atheling and his sister, Queen Margaret. William St. Clair, says Father Hay, was sent by his father to Scotland "to take a view of the people's good behaviour," and Queen Margaret being attracted by his wisdom, King Malcolm made him her Cup-bearer. He also obtained "the Barony of Rosline, so called because it represents a peninsula, being environed almost on all sides with water." He became Warden of the Southern Marches, in defending which he was killed. His son Sir Henry, who lived in the Conqueror's time, "got of the King and Queen, Rosline with the Barony of Pithland" also called "Penthland" (Pentland); and married *Rosabell* (daughter of the Earl of Stratherne), a name which remained in the St. Clair and Rosslyn families for all time. ("Genealogie.")

Another gives the origin as follows:—(1) Walderness, Compte de St. Clare, having married Helena, daughter of the Duke of Normandy, cousin-germain of William the Conqueror, came over to England with that great Prince in 1066; his son (2) William de Sancto Claro came to Scotland soon after, and being a youth of distinguished merit, was well received by King Malcolm Canmore, became Steward to Queen Margaret, and obtained a grant of the lands and barony of Roslin. He was father of (3) William Sinclair who married a daughter of the Earl of March, by whom he had a son, (4) Sir William Sinclair, whose son (5) Sir Henry Sinclair of Roslin married a daughter of the Earl of Mar by whom he had a son (6) Sir William Sinclair who died in

1270 and was succeeded by (7) Sir William Sinclair. He was appointed High Sheriff of the Shire of Edinburgh in 1271. He was one of the Magnates Scotiae who obliged themselves to receive and defend their lawful Queen and Sovereign Margaret, daughter of Erick, King of Norway, in case of King Alexander's death: without male issue, in 1284: and that same year he was appointed one of the Ambassadors Extraordinary to negotiate the marriage of King Alexander III. He was also one of the Scottish Nobles chosen on the part of King Robert Bruce in his competition for the Crown with John Baliol in 1292, and was afterwards with many of his countrymen compelled to swear allegiance to King Edward of England in 1294. He died about the year 1300. His three sons were Henry, progenitor of the family of Sinclair of Dunbeath, William, Bishop of Dunkeld, and Sir Gregory who flourished in the reign of King Robert Bruce. (Sir Egerton Brydges MS. Biographies, Nat. Lib. Edin.).

We shall leave the family there for the moment; and ask the question we all wish to put:

What were the motives of William, the Third Earl of Orkney, in building Rosslyn Church?

Well, he is described as a man "given to policy, as building of castles, palaces, and churches." He succeeded his father, who died about 1417, and built a large part of Rosslyn Castle, and made improvements and enlargements. Then Father Hay tells us that Prince William, his age creeping on him, came to consider how he had spent his time past, and how he was to spend his remaining days. "Therefore, to the end that he might not seem altogether unthankful to God for the benefices he received from Him, it came into his mind to build a house for God's service, of most curious work, the which, that it might be done with greater glory and splendour, he caused artificers to be brought from other regions and foreign kingdoms, and caused daily to be abundance of all kinds of workmen present, as masons, carpenters, smiths, barrowmen, and quarriers, with others; for

it is remembered, that for the space of thirty-four years before, he never wanted great numbers of such workmen. (Work was going on at the Castle for many years). The foundation of this rare work, he caused to be laid in the year of our Lord 1446; and to the end the work might be more rare: first, he caused the draughts (draft plans) to be drawn upon Eastland (Norwegian or Hanseatic, probably from the Baltic) boards, and made the carpenters to carve them according to the draughts thereon, and then gave them for patterns to the masons, that they might thereby cut the like in stone (not an unusual practice even before that date); and because he thought the masons had not a convenient place to lodge in near the place where he builded this curious College, for the town then stood half a mile from the place where it now stands, to wit, at Bilsdone (Bilston) Burne, therefore he made them build the town of Rosline, that now is extant (end of 17th century), and gave everyone a house and lands. . . . He rewarded the masons according to their degree, as to the Master Mason he gave forty pounds yearly, and to everyone of the rest ten pounds, and accordingly did he reward the others, as the smiths and the carpenters, with others."

### AN ALL STONE CHAPEL

Roslyn Chapel is the most interesting specimen existing of this type of Chapel wholly built of stone. Why then were so many carpenters employed? The explanation is in the use of so large an amount of "Eastland boards" for the drawings and patterns, and also for the scaffolding and centering, especially for the vaults, arches and roof, which would no doubt be on a large scale, and would remain in position till the work was completed. The high and weighty roof alone would require much timber.

### HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BUILD?

Building began after the foundation stone was laid in 1446, and it is thought that it was 36 to 40 years in

building. Doubt was cast on Hay's date of the foundation, some thought it earlier, but the date seems to have been settled, although the Foundation Charter is lost, by the discovery on the exterior wall head-course of the north clerestory wall, where a series of shields forms the decorative treatment. Each alternate shield bears in relief a capital letter:—

W . L . S . F . Y . C . Y . Z . O . G . M . iii . j . L .

This was translated by Dr. Thomas Dickson, Register House, Edinburgh, as follows:—

Wilzame . Lord . Sinclare . Fundit . Yis . College .  
Ye . Zeir . Of . God . MCCCCL (1450).

The difference of four years between 1446 and 1450 would be accounted for in respect that four years would be required for the underbuilding.

#### COMPLETED BY FOUNDER'S SON

Sir William St. Clair, the Founder, died in 1484, and was buried in the still unfinished Chapel. His son and successor in the Barony of Rosslyn, Sir Oliver St. Clair, did not carry out in full detail his father's original design in completing the building. He was not so keen on building Churches, and preferred other ways of employing his riches. "He finished the Chapel, as appears by his escutcheon in the vault" ("Genealogie," p. 107), roofing in the Choir with its stone vault. The condition of the Carvings inside, and the fragmentary state of the cornice over the Lady Chapel show evident marks of incompleteness. The foliated string course, for instance, going round the building banding the vaulting shafts, going over the top of the doors and under the windows and climbing over a piscina in the south-east Chapel rising nearly to the vaulting, stops mysteriously in the west bays. The incised slab over the Founder's grave between pillars Nos. 15 and 16 is an unworthy specimen of

medieval work. It represents a Knight in armour, with hands uplifted and joined as if in prayer, with a greyhound at his feet, and on each side of the head is a small shield with a lion rampant. A shield bearing his Arms with those of his first wife appears on the north wall pillar opposite No. 16.

The foundations for the whole building had been laid, and the east walls of the north and south transepts built, with all preparations in the way of carvings; also an altar with piscina and aumbry in each transept. The openings into the nave and transepts were, however, solidly built up, so that the Chapel could at once be used for service. The foundations of the nave which extended about ninety-one feet to the west, were dug up at the beginning of last century.

“Had the entire project been carried out, it would have formed a unique composition in this country” (John Watson, F.R.I.B.A., *Trans. Edin. Arch. Assn.*, vol. IX, 1928). “All other eccentricities of construction are trivial in importance as they are small in scale, compared with the proposed vaulting of the nave. The eastern wall of the transept is complete, and it shows that the nave was to have been an enormous barrel vault embracing quire, centre and aisles, and rising to a far greater height . . . it was planned to discard the usual Scottish tradition of treating the transept roofs as separate units, opening by massive arches with gables above them, and to have the transept vaults break into the central one, while not rising nearly so high . . . any steeple would have projected from the north-west corner.” (Ian C. Hannah, “*Story of Scotland in Stone*,” 1934.)

#### ENDOWMENTS LOST

Included among the Endowments were Churchlands of Pentland (Old Pentland); four acres of meadow; manse, houses, buildings, and eight souns grass at that town; sixteen souns in Pentland Hills called the Kipps; also land near the Chapel for dwelling houses and gardens for the Provost and

Prebendaries, which may be represented in the ruined foundations—traditionally known as “the Provost’s house” on the left of the road between Rosslyn Chapel and the Castle. All the revenues and endowments by the Founder and others, passed away at the Reformation. In 1571 (Feb. 28), forty-eight years after the last endowment, we find the Provost and Prebendaries resigning, as by force and violence, all and everyone of the several donations into secular hands inalienably; and withal complaining that, for many years before, their revenues had been violently detained from them. To this Charter the Seal of the Chapter of the Collegiate Church was appended, being “St. Matthew in a Kirk, red upon white wax ; as also the Seal of the then Sir William St. Clair of Roslin, being a ragged cross, red upon white wax.” The Charter is signed by John Robeson, Provost of Rosling, John How, Vicar of Pentland; Henry Sinclair, Prebendary, and W. Sinclair of Roslin, Knight. (Hay, vol. II, p. 350.)

#### OLD PENTLAND

This was an important centre in its day. The Church of Pentland was granted to the monks of Holyrood at the time of the Abbey’s foundation, confirmed in 1240; became an independent Rectory before the death of Alexander III, and from the 14th to the 16th century was under the patronage of the St. Clairs, so that it passed through all the varying forms of faith and church government inherent in the Scottish tradition—Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Presbyterian. For twenty years prior to 1592 there was a struggle in the country between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, and the former was definitely established in 1592. A period of Episcopacy lasted from 1610 to 1638, and again from 1661 to 1689. In 1688 came The Revolution, the end of Episcopacy and the establishment of Presbyterianism in July, 1689. There was a house in Pentland which was called the “Provost’s house” inhabited by Henry Sinclair, who held the office or title of “Provost of Roslin.” In

1601 he granted a Charter of the Church lands to Sir William St. Clair. Among Pre-Reformation ministers of Pentland was Sir John Sinclair, fourth son of Sir Oliver, who completed Rosslyn Chapel, afterwards Dean of Restalrig, Bishop of Brechin, Lord President of the Court of Session, and solemnized the marriage of Queen Mary and Darnley at Holyrood in 1565. Sir John Robeson was the last incumbent of Pentland. The Parish ceased to exist after the Reformation, and was united to Lasswade. Pentland was also the birth-place of the Reformed Presbyterian Church ("The Cameronians") (1681), who refused to have any part in the "Revolution Settlement" and maintained their claim to be "the historical representatives of the Covenanted Church of Scotland." They removed from Pentland to Loanhead in 1792, where they are still represented. At the time of the "Pentland Rising" (1666) Father Hay was about five years old, and in "The Genealogie of the Hayes of Tweeddale" which he completed about 1700, we learn that his father assisted in the Battle against the Covenanters—"some humorous and factious people," he writes, "ingaged in rebellious courses, and came to Pentland in arms; they were discomfited by General Dalziel, his father was assistant against the rebels, and he himself remembers that, in coming home, to have seen several balls fall out of his boots in pulling them off. Whatsomever was the pretext of such an irregular proceeding, we can say that we are commanded to obey Kings as well good as evil." The Covenanters thought otherwise, and in due course their cause was victorious. Only the foundations of the old Pentland Church now remain. In 1815 the gable ends of the old Church were still standing "with trees growing in the aisles."

#### OF WHAT DOES THE CHAPEL CONSIST?

A Choir of five bays, with north, south and east aisles, and a Retro-Choir, or Lady Chapel. The walls of the aisles are strengthened at each bay by massive

buttresses, surmounted by richly ornamented conical and square pinnacles, embellished with crockets, from which also rise the flying buttresses, which sustain the thrust of the roof vault at the clerestory walls. The walls are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick. On the unfinished west gable is a square Bell-cot for two bells.

Two doors lead into the Chapel—north and south, differing in design. Each is square-headed, with circular arch thrown over on the outside between the two adjacent buttresses. Traditionally, the north door is the "Bachelors' Door." Perhaps the two doors had something to do with the separation of the sexes. The Holy Water font at the south door, however, indicates it as the entrance door, the north entrance having no such feature, and worshippers at the Chapel altars would retire by it. The form or bench along the ambulatory walls indicates crowded congregations on Saints' and Feast Days, although it is suggested that the expression "the weak to the wall," meant that only those unable to stand sat on this bench.

Let us enter by the north door. Immediately we are conscious of the soft dim religious light, which pervades the building from the stained-glass windows, and the richness of the colouring sweetened by the mellowing influence of time—

"The high enbowèd roof,  
With antique pillars, massy-proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light.

"There let the pealing organ blow,  
To the full-voiced quire below,  
In service high, and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes."

"Il Penseroso"—Milton.

The inside dimensions are: Choir, 48 ft. 4 ins. by 17 ft.  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ins. Height 33 ft. 6 ins. to the springing of the arched roof; including aisles and Lady Chapel,

total length 69 ft. 8 ins.; breadth 35ft., height 41 ft. 9 ins. to the apex of roof.

The main part of the building—the Choir, stands upon 13 shafted or beaded pillars with carved Capitals, 8 ft. in height, forming an arcade of 12 pointed arches, 5 on each side and 2 under the east gable. Three other pillars divide the east aisle from the Lady Chapel. Over the arcade is an ornamental string course, above which are the clerestory windows of single lights, without tracery, five on each side. The east window which is of two lights, is on the same level as the clerestory windows, but larger and much higher, being in the gable. The aisles and Lady Chapel have almost flat roofs reaching just above the arches, so that there is no triforium.

One peculiarity of the Chapel is the “straight arches” (as they are erroneously called) of the aisles; *i.e.*, instead of ordinary arches, a lintel or architrave, consisting of 7 or 9 stones, connects each pillar with the outside wall. These are said to be hollowed out on the inside, and bear nothing more than their own weight, as there are “saving arches” above them. In some instances these are quite visible, others are hidden by the moulded cope of the lintels. Each bay of the aisles is vaulted from east to west, thus giving height to the windows on the north and south.

The Lady Chapel extends the whole width of the Chapel, and is 7 ft. 6 ins. wide and 15 ft. high, the floor being elevated one step above that of the Choir. The roof is groined in simplest manner, but with a marvellous profusion of detailed ornamentation. The diagonal ribs meet in a keystone, which forms a pendant, 2 ft. long—(see “Carvings”). All the lower windows are of two lights, divided by a shafted mullion with carved caps and bases, the splays being fitted with curiously carved brackets to support figures (see “Carvings”). The roof of the Choir is barrel vaulted, of stone, in five compartments, divided by four elaborate carved ribs in different designs, each compartment being powdered in diaper work, with stars, roses, square and circular *paterae* ornaments, full of symbolism requiring interpretation through



ENRICHED VAULTING OF QUIRE

SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING WEST



medieval thought. Bright sunshine is essential to the full appreciation of its rich beauty and exquisite mellow colouring.

Between the clerestory windows is a double row of brackets for statues, the canopy of the lower forming the base of that above. There are twelve on each side. Over the central pillar under the East window is a niche of more elaborate design. Here, probably stood a figure of the Blessed Virgin, with the Infant Saviour in her arms. Figures of the Apostles also occupied other brackets up to the Reformation.

There were four altars in the Lady Chapel, dedicated 5th Feb., 1523 ("Edinburgh Magazine" article), to St. Matthew, the Blessed Virgin, St. Andrew, and St. Peter (beginning at the north end). The last was sometimes called the "High Altar," as it stood on a high platform to give headway to the stair leading to the Crypt. The principal altar, however, stood in front of the central pillar, under the figure of the Blessed Virgin, where the present altar now stands. All these figures were destroyed at the time of, and subsequent to, the Reformation, and are mentioned in the Dalkeith Presbytery Records. Carved and decorated fragments are still being found from time to time, and are preserved in the Crypt.

#### ALTARS CAST DOWN—CEASES TO BE HOUSE OF PRAYER

From about 1592 when the altars were demolished, it would almost appear that the Chapel ceased to be used as a house of prayer, and it began to fall into disrepair. After the Battle of Dunbar 1650, Cromwell's troops, under General Monk (who besieged and battered down Rosslyn Castle) stabled their horses in the Chapel. It again suffered at the hands of a mob on the night of 11th December, 1688, when the Castle was pillaged. Father Hay says, "I lost several books of note, amongst others, the original manuscript of Adam Abel, which I had of my Lord Tarbat, then Register." Adam Abel, a famous writer, lived and

died a Gray-Friar in Jedburgh Monastery. The book was an English abridgement of his Latin History of Scotland from early times to 1536, entitled "Rota Temporum." (Proc. Soc. Ant., Jan. 8, 1877.)

And so things continued till 1736, when the estate passed into the hands of General St. Clair, who caused the windows to be glazed—before this there were shutters on the outside, the iron hinges remain. He also put new flagstones on the roof and floor, and built the high boundary wall round the cemetery.

As showing the condition of the Chapel at this time, it is interesting to note what Dorothy Wordsworth, who visited the Chapel along with the poet, 17th September, 1803, entered in her Diary of their Scottish tour:—

"Went to see the inside of the Chapel of Rosslyn which is kept locked up, and so preserved from the injuries it might otherwise receive from idle boys; but as nothing is done to keep it together, it must in the end, fall. The architecture within is exquisitely beautiful."

Queen Victoria who visited the Chapel on 14th September, 1842, with Prince Albert and the Duchess of Buccleuch, is said to have been "so much impressed with the beauty of the building, that she expressed a desire that so unique a gem should be preserved to the country."

King Edward, George V, Queen Mary, George VI, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, have all visited the Chapel from time to time, as well as other Kings and Queens, Rulers, Indian Princes, Prime Ministers and notabilities in every sphere of British, Colonial, Continental and Foreign influence. Every corner of the earth is represented in the pages of the Visitors' Books. A Portuguese stood waiting at the gate for admission, one winter morning recently, before it was daylight.

#### THE CHAPEL RESTORED

Much was done towards the preservation of the venerable and sacred building by Sir Alexander

Wedderburn, St. Clair, who became Lord High Chancellor of England, and was created Lord Loughborough of Loughborough in Surrey, and First Earl of Rosslyn (1801).

In 1861 it was agreed by James Alexander St. Clair Erskine, Third Earl of Rosslyn, who married Frances Wemyss, daughter of Lieut.-General Wemyss of Wemyss Castle, Fife, that Sunday Services should again be held, and David Bryce, R.S.A., Architect, Edinburgh, was instructed in the desire for restoration, which to His Lordship was a "work and labour of love," for he spared no time, trouble or money to further the work of renewing and retouching the carvings of the Lady Chapel, etc. The flags were relaid in the Crypt, and the altar there set up. The Chapel was re-opened and re-dedicated on Easter Tuesday, 22nd April, 1862, when the Bishop of Brechin preached from the text—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth" (Ps. xxvi, 8). The Rev. R. Cole, then resident Military Chaplain at Greenlaw Barracks, was constituted by the Earl his "Domestic Chaplain" in consideration of the active part he took, along with Lady Helen Wedderburn of Rosebank, daughter of Walter, Seventh Earl of Airlie, in instituting the renewal of worship in the Chapel.

The Earl's son and successor—Francis Robert St. Clair Erskine, Fourth Earl of Rosslyn, who was appointed by Queen Victoria Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, was keenly interested in the Chapel, and with loving thought and generous gifts continued his father's work. He built the apse to serve as a Baptistry in 1880-1, with organ chamber above, thus opening up the lofty arch, which was intended to form the "Rood-loft." This and the entrance into the Baptistry have been filled with handsome oak tracery, adding greatly to the interior beauty of the Chapel at the west end.

#### THE CRYPT

A stair, originally arched over, at the south-east corner, leads by four plus twenty steps to a smaller

Chapel or Crypt, 15 ft. high, 14 ft. broad and 36 ft. long, which has also served as a Sacristy and Vestry. It contains an East window looking out to the Esk woodlands, an altar, piscina, and aumbry used for Divine Service while the Chapel was in building, as it is of older date than the Chapel.

On a corbel to the north of the window is a Shield with the Rosslyn Arms—the engrailed cross: another on the south, coupé Orkney and Rosslyn; and the second part coupé of three, Douglas and Touraine; in the first, three stars; in the second, three fleurs-de-lis; in the third, a heart, bearing the Arms of Lady Elizabeth Douglas, formerly Countess of Buchan (the Earl fell in the Battle of Verneuil, France, fighting in the Scots Army under the Earl of Douglas, her father, who was also slain, 17th August, 1424), first wife of the Founder. Her father, Fourth Earl of Douglas and First Duke of Touraine, built the gem of Lincluden 1424, and she would naturally be greatly interested in the building of Rosslyn Chapel. Like her mother, who was a daughter of Robert III and his Queen Annabella, and sister of James I, she was of a refined and pious nature. She died before the completion of the Chapel (1452). His second wife was of Royal Scottish blood—Lady Marjorie, daughter of Alexander Sutherland of Dunbeath, Caithness (Charter of Dunbeath, 24th October, 1429), her great grandmother Jane Bruce, being younger daughter of King Robert Bruce.

There is a vaulted stone roof and the four ribs form a series of engrailed crosses—crosses with a border composed of little semi-circular indents, the arms of which rest on carved corbels, one of which contains a female figure with a rosary. The Crypt is otherwise bare of ornamentation. It contains a fireplace, wall cupboards, two doors leading to other outside buildings, and was probably used as a custodier's or living room. There are some scratched working drawings on the walls, perhaps those of craftsmen building the Chapel; and drawing of a pinnacle.

This Crypt or Sacristy may have had some connection with the Castle, and that some previous building

existed on the site seems probable, for in "Theatrum Scotiae" (Slezer) we read that three Earls or Princes of Orkney, and nine Barons of Rosslyn, are buried here. The founder of the Chapel was the third and last Earl, and probably the first Earl and certainly the second was buried here, thirty years before the Chapel was begun in 1446.

Visitors ascending from the Crypt should pause a few steps before reaching the upper Chapel whence we get a good view of the vista of "straight arches" in the south aisle. The roof of the Lady Chapel is best seen from the third step from the top.

### COATS OF ARMS

Two are described above. Over the capital of the central pillar (East Gable) is a shield bearing Orkney, Caithness, Rosslyn. This fixes the date between 1455, when the Founder received the Earldom of Caithness from James III, and 1476, when he resigned it in favour of his third son William, founder of the Caithness family, who fell at Flodden. Opposite Pillar 16 (see "Carvings") on the north wall pillar is another Coat of Arms previously mentioned. The engrailed cross—the St. Clair Arms, is to be seen, not only on the roof of the Crypt as noted above, but also on the roof of the aisles, in the window tracery, and elsewhere.

A monument to the great grandson of the Founder, George, fourth Earl of Caithness (died 1582) stands against the wall in the north-west corner of the Chapel. It bears the family Coat of Arms, and the motto—"Commit they verk to God." On the top of the tomb is a pineapple.

### THE VAULTS

The entrance to the burial place of "the lordly owners of the Castle, the proud St. Clairs," is under a slab between Pillars 14 and 15. It gives a hollow

sound when tapped. Built of polished ashlar, the Vaults are in two compartments, separated by a wall down the centre. Sir Walter Scott says in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel":

" There are twenty of Rosslyn's Barons bold  
Lie buried within that proud Chapelle.

" And each St. Clair was buried there,  
With candle, with book, and with knell."

Sir William, who was interred in the Chapel on the day of the Battle of Dunbar (3rd September, 1650), was the last to be buried in armour, in accordance with the prevailing custom, all the earlier ones being so buried.

The first to be buried in a coffin was Sir James St. Clair, stepfather of Father Hay. The family suffered much for their adhesion to the Crown, and especially to Mary, Queen Dowager of James V, Queen Mary of Scotland, and Charles II. The burial in this fashion was against the sentiments of the King, James VII, then in Scotland, but Father Hay tells us that the widow thought it beggarly to be buried in armour, and the great expense she was at in burying her husband occasioned the Sumptuary Acts to restrict within reasonable bounds the expenses incurred at burials, baptisms, etc.

The second and third Earls of Rosslyn, their Countesses, and James Alexander George, Lord Loughborough, born 1830 died 1851, are buried in the Lady Chapel.

#### SIR WALTER SCOTT ON THE LAST OF THE ST. CLAIRS, THE GRAND MASTER MASON

The last to be buried in the vaults was Sir William, the last heir male of the Rosslyn branch of the St. Clairs, who died in 1778, at the age of 78, the last to hold the office of Hereditary Grand Master of the Order of Freemasonry in Scotland, which he resigned

into the hands of the Scottish Lodges in 1736, an event which led to the formation of the Grand Lodges of Scotland. At the meeting in Edinburgh, on St. Andrew's Day, 1736, Sir William was appointed the first Grand Master Mason of Scotland, after being initiated in the summer of that year in Canongate-Kilwinning Lodge, whose chapel contains a full-length portrait of the youthful Sir William. He signs in the books of the Lodge "Wm. St. Clair." The mallet of the Master of this Lodge, his symbol of office, a real working mason's mallet with chisel indentations, is said to have been found built into the walls of Rosslyn Chapel, when alterations were being made, and presented to the Lodge in 1736, and is so entered, I am informed, in the Inventories of the Lodge property. Rosslyn Chapel contains twenty-two Mason's marks, detailed in Wilson's "Archaeology of Scotland," p. 640. The privilege of Grand Master is said to have been hereditary in the family since the time of James II (1437-1460) who first granted it, and in whom Sir William found a congenial friend, but dubiety exists, although two Charters were granted by the Masons to Sir William in 1630 homologating the hereditary privilege, and stating that the original documents had been destroyed by fire in Roslin Castle ("Genealogie," p. 157-163). Four hundred members of Edinburgh Lodges attended the funeral.

The Barons of Rosslyn held their principal annual meetings at Kilwinning. The ecclesiastical fraternities—the Benedictine Order as at Dunfermline, the Cistercian Order which was supposed to have a monastery at Newhall, Carlops—"Call of the Pentlands," ch. VI), and others, were large employers of labour, and had many skilled builders and architectural craftsmen during the 13th and 14th centuries under their control, but they were largely superseded by the whole Masons of Christendom forming a Society which was held together by certain oaths and observances, and working upon ecclesiastical architecture throughout Europe, which they advanced to high perfection. Such were employed at Rosslyn in the 15th century, and while the latter were often inclined

to be more free and coarsely humorous in their form of art, as at Trinity College ("Contemporary History," p. 43) there is little of this levity in the Rosslyn carvings, which probably had the Founder's—the Grand Master Mason's—own supervision. Nevertheless, there are many strange and amusing things that you will see if you are painstaking in your search, and use a little imagination. In the south-east corner, over the 'Prentice Pillar is the representation of a "one-man band," and above Pillar 5, an eager little Imp holding on with claws, peering down on the priest by the altar; and another intriguing Imp above Pillar 15, something similar to the Lincoln Imp, quizzically looking down on the assembled congregation. On a corbel outside, against an eastern buttress there is a fox dressed as a Friar preaching to a congregation of geese. These add to the variety, although Saint Bernard and others deprecated such levity in ecclesiastical fabrics.

Of this Sir William, Sir Walter Scott who knew him as a genuine Scottish laird of the old stamp, wrote:—

"The last Rosslyn (for he was universally known by his patrimonial designation) was a man considerably over six feet, with dark grey locks, a form upright, but gracefully so, thin-flanked and broad-shouldered, built, it would seem, for the business of the war or chase, a noble eye of chastened pride and undoubted authority, and features handsome and striking in their general effect, though somewhat harsh and exaggerated when considered in detail. His complexion was dark and grizzled, and as we schoolboys, who crowded to see him perform feats of strength and skill in the old Scottish games of golf and archery, used to think and say amongst ourselves, the whole figure resembled the famous founder of the Douglas race, pointed out, it is pretended, to the Scottish monarch on a conquered field of battle, as the man whose arm had achieved the victory, by the expressive words SHOLTO DHOUGLAS—'behold the dark grey man.' In all the manly sports which require strength and dexterity, Rosslyn was unrivalled; but his particular delight was in archery." (Scott's Prose

works, vol. III, p. 369). He was a member of the Royal Company of Archers, the King's Bodyguard for Scotland.

### “THE LORDLY LINE OF HIGH ST. CLAIR”

The noble and wealthy family of the St. Clairs may be said to have reached the zenith of its ancient power in the person of Baron Sir Henry, second Prince of Orkney, who succeeded his father the first Prince, in the year 1400.

The first Prince, Henry, eldest son of Sir William St. Clair of Roslin and Isabel, daughter and co-heiress of Malise, Earl of Strathern, (Caithness and Orkney) obtained recognition from King Haakon VI of Norway and Sweden, and was installed on August 2, 1379 (“Records of the Earldom of Orkney,” p. 21), and became Lord Shetland, Lord Sinclair, Lord Chief Justice of Scotland, Admiral of the Seas, Great Protector, Keeper and Defender of the Prince of Scotland. His rank and influence were so great that he was allowed to stamp and issue coins within his dominions, make laws and remit crimes. “The tradition runs that the Smith's house at Roslin was of old the place where pieces of money were coined” (Hay's Memoirs, vol. II, p. 464). “Of the princely state maintained in the Isles by the house of St. Clair, the coins they minted, the laws they passed, and the lacquays who attended their walks abroad, a full account may be read in the pages of those veracious historians, Hay and Van Bassan” (“Records of the Earldom of Orkney,” Intro., p. XLV., Scottish History Society, Second Series, vol. VII). A Sword of Honour was carried before him wherever he went: he had a Crown in his arms, and bore a Crown on his head when he constituted laws, and indeed was second only to the King. Nine of the large family which he left were daughters. A member of the St. Clair family became Bishop of Orkney in 1383 (Dowden, Bishops, pp. 260-9).

The second Prince of Orkney his son, Baron of Pentland and Pentland-moor, married Egidia or Giles

Douglas, daughter of the valiant Sir William Douglas, "whose beauty did so dazzle the eyes of the beholders that they became presently astonished, and revived on admiring the same"; "she added the rays of virtue and holiness to a noble extraction, to the glory of ancestors and the splendour of her family. She was noways taken with the deceitful appearances of the goods of this world, with pleasures that delight the senses and with honours that bewitch the most part of mankind" ("Genealogie," p. 69).

Through his marriage the Prince added to his estates and honours the Lordship of Nithsdale, Wardenship of the three Border Marches, with six Baronies, and the Sheriffship of Nithsdale, with the town of Dumfries. "Robert III freed him of the Castle warde due for his lands of Rosline, 1404; Archibald, Earl of Douglas, granted him in 1407 the Barony of Herbertshire, Stirling." Father Hay describes him as "a Valiant Prince, well proportioned, of middle stature, broad-bodied, fair in face, yellow-haired, hasty and stern." His influence in the country was enormous, and he arranged marriages for his nine sisters with the Earl of Douglas, Earl of Dalhousie, Laird of Calder, Laird of Corstorphine, Earl of Errol, Laird of Drumelzier, Laird of Stirling, Laird of Maretone, Laird of Sommervail. His eldest daughter married the Earl of March, and Beatrice married James, Earl of Douglas. Father Hay adds—"He had the greatest part of the nobility in the country his Fialls, and their bonds of Manrent, including Lord Borthwick who had 'ten liberties (pounds?) of the Earn Craig yearly, pertaining to the Barony of Pentland Hills'; there were few, except Douglas and the Earl of March, but were some way bound to him; whom also he used to entertain into his house; at sundry times of the year, with their ladies and servants, as at Easter and Christmas, and other solemn feasts. He had continually in his house 300 riding gentlemen, and his Princess 55 gentlewomen, whereof 35 were ladies. He had his dainties tasted before him. He had meeting him when he went to Orkney 300 men with red scarlet gowns and coats of black velvet." He was also Lord

High Admiral of Scotland. During his minority James I, who was born in July, 1394, in the royal lodging attached to the Benedictine Monastery at Dunfermline (James I, Balfour-Melville, p. 10), was under his guardianship.

Proceeding to the French Court for protection and education in 1406, Prince James, then twelve years old, was accompanied by Sir Henry, but the Prince became seasick, "not being able to abide the smell of the waters," and they landed on the English coast, and were imprisoned by command of the English King (Henry IV), the young Prince remaining a prisoner for over eighteen years. One John Robinsone, indweller at Pentland, and tenant of Sir Henry, went to England, where his master was, and there played the fool so cunningly that without suspicion he gained entrance to the prison, and one evening conveyed his master without the gate in disguised apparel. They travelled by night, resting by day. They found great enquiry for them when they came to the Borders. Two "southerns" made at them, and laid hold of their horses, but Sir Henry knew how to use his fists, and struck one of them to the ground, where he died; the other fled "with shrieks and lamentable cries." Arriving in Scotland, Sir Henry asked his deliverer what reward he would like, but he declared he wished for no reward, but that he might go to Pentland, before he went to Rosline, and "pass three times about the Linstone (Line-stone, boundary stone?) thereof, which he did" ("Genealogie," p. 21).

This is quite a good story, and it would be a pity to spoil it. But the record of history is equally interesting: here it is. The Prince (James I) and his escort of Nobles sailed from the Bass Rock in March, 1406, on a Danzig ship loaded with a cargo of "wool, hides and wool-fells of the growth of Scotland" (was this the cause of the Prince's nausea?). The ship was captured off Flamborough Head by pirates or privateers, who were rewarded by King Henry with the gift of the ship's cargo, Sir Henry protesting, but in vain. The heir to the Scottish throne was sent to the Tower, and remained in nominal captivity till 1424, when he

returned to Scotland with a Queen, Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, maternally related to Richard II. The poetical version of the courtship in the "Kingis Quair" (Book) is probably historically correct, and their married life was happy (James I, Balfour-Melville, p. 94). Sir Henry set out for home in September, 1407, leaving hostages in his stead, under "safe conduct, until Christmas, with 12 servants horse or foot, and returning from thence by that date, as he has made security to the King by writing obligatory, sealed with his seal, that he will surrender his body within the Castle of Durham." Safe conduct was also granted to his brother, John de Sancto Claro. Later Sir Henry apparently effected his ransom by borrowing the necessary money in Scotland (R.M.S. i. 902 shows he borrowed 300 nobles of English Money from Sir John Forrester of Corstorphine before the end of December, 1407, "Balfour-Melville," p. 39). Sir Henry took part in the negotiations for the King's release. Henry IV saw to the good education of the Prince, for he loved music and learning and languages; and later, James was at the Coronation Banquet of Henry V and Catherine, and visited various parts of England with them.

Sir Henry was of generous disposition—"His house was free for all men, so that there was no indigent that were his friends but received food and raiment, no tenants sore oppressed but had sufficient to maintain them; and, in a word, he was a pattern of piety to all his posterity; for his zeal was so great that before all things, he preferred God's service, which appeared in this that he gifted the Abbey of Holyroodhouse so richly with lands sufficient to feed 7,000 sheep—the 'Back and Fore Spittals (Carlops), with the Middle and Loch Thirds and Slipperfields (West Linton), together with the tithes of Saint Katherine's church in the Hopes'." To his brother John he gifted "Kirkton, Loganhouse, Earn Craig, Easter and Wester Summer Hopes" in the Pentlands ("Genealogie," p. 24).

On his death in 1420 (Fordun, Scotichron. XV, ch. 32), he was succeeded by the third and last Prince

of Orkney, who founded the Chapel in 1446, "the last of the Orkney jarls." On the death of his father he was too young to rule the Orkney Islands, and Bishop Thomas Tulloch acted in his stead under Commission from King Erick (June 17, 1420). On March 28, 1425, the people of Orkney appealed to the Queen of "Norway, Denmark, Sweden and of the Slavs and Goths, and Duchess of Pomerania," asking that the young Earl be appointed Governor; he was installed August 9, 1434 ("Records of the Earldom of Orkney," pp. 32, 45, 48).

Following upon this, there is in the "Records" a document "Diploma of the Succession to the Earldom of Orkney," the purport of which was to establish Sir William's right to the Earldom in response to a demand by King Christian of Norway, in which the Earl gives evidence "that divers Charters, etc., were consumed by fire and lost in time of hostility and wars of certain rivals and enemies, through absence and lack of a secure house or mansion inexpugnable, where such might have been harboured. . . . But true it is and in verity we bear witness by the relation of our trustworthy predecessors that the principal and special house or mansion of the lords Earls of Orkney has been divers times burnt and reduced to nothing and wholly destroyed and the whole country spoiled and wasted by our rivals and enemies, through which depredations we firmly believe that the principal evidents, charters and divers others letters patent have been and are lost and destroyed, pertaining to and concerning the predecessors and ancestors of the said lord Earl, through default of a Castle in which the said evidence, charters and other valuables of the country might have been safely harboured." This is dated May 4, 1446 (when the Chapel was begun), but possibly 1443 (Prof. Munch, Extracts from the Bannatyne Miscellanies, vol. III, pp. 179-196 and 63-64). The Diploma was translated by Dean Thomas Guild, monk of Newbattle, 1554, from Latin into Scottish at the request of "William Santclar Barroun of Roislin, Pentland and Harberschire." This Sir William was interested in the collection of old MSS.,

and is said to have been successful in collecting a great many which had been taken out of the Monasteries at the Reformation. He once rescued a Gypsy from being hanged, as narrated on p. 65.

The first part of the Castle of Rosslyn is said to have been built about 1304 (p. 45). At the fire in the Castle in 1447 (p. 47), the Charters were said to have been saved! We have referred to the lost original Masonic documents, which were granted in the reign of James II (1437-1460), and may have been destroyed with the Charters referred to in the above Deposition by Sir William.

He became Lord Chancellor of Scotland in 1454.

In 1468 Orkney passed in mortgage to Scotland. James III having acquired the Islands of Orkney in marriage with Margaret of Denmark, the Earl of Orkney resigned his Earldom into his Sovereign's hands, and in 1471 they were annexed to the Scottish Crown by Act of Parliament, when the Earldom lands became "King's lands"—Act. Part. II, 102 (February 20, 1471-2), Sir William receiving as compensation Dysart, Ravensheugh and Ravensraig Castle in Fife, and became Earl of Caithness and First Lord Sinclair. He divided his estates during his lifetime between his three eldest sons, and the once vast possessions were scattered among the three branches of the family—the Lords St. Clair of Dysart, the St. Clairs of Rosslyn, and the Sinclairs of Caithness. Though separated, two at least of these branches became united again in the person of Henry, Eighth Lord Sinclair of Herdmanston, from whom the present Earls of Rosslyn are descended.

### EARLS OF ROSSLYN

The "Last Rosslyn" of whom Sir Walter Scott wrote, married Cordelia, daughter of Sir George Wishart, Bart., of Clifton Hall. All his family died young, except his daughter Sarah, who became his heiress. She married Sir Peter Wedderburn of Chester Hall, and their family consisted of a son,

Alexander, and a daughter, Janet, grand-daughter (on her mother's side) of Sir William the last heir male, who married Sir Henry Erskine, Fifth Baronet of Alva, and who by the death of her brother without issue became heiress to her mother and brother. The son, Alexander Wedderburn St. Clair, the Lord High Chancellor of England, Lord Loughborough, and *First Earl of Rosslyn*, who as beforementioned restored the Chapel, died in 1803, leaving the title to his nephew, who became the *Second Earl*, Sir James Alexander St. Clair Erskine, Baronet, succeeded by his son also James Alexander St. Clair Erskine, *Third Earl*.

The Chapel was restored by this Earl also, who died in 1866, and was succeeded by his second son—Francis Robert St. Clair Erskine, *Fourth Earl*, born 1833, who took so much interest in the Chapel. He was also a poet, author of volumes of Sonnets (1883) and Sonnets and Poems (1889), including "A Jubilee Lyric," written in 1887 and dedicated to Queen Victoria, and published at Her Majesty's command, entitled "Love that lasts for ever." He died at Dysart, 6th September, 1890, and was buried at his own request in the south-west corner of the Chapel grounds—the first of a long line of St. Clairs of Rosslyn buried *outside* the Chapel. Visitors will note the handsome monument to his memory, and that of his widow, in the grounds. The following "from the Sonnets" is inscribed on the monument—

" Safe, safe at last from doubt, from storm, from  
strife  
Moored in the depths of Christ's unfathomed  
grave  
With spirits of just, with dear ones lost  
And found again, this strange ineffable life  
Is Life Eternal; Death has here no place  
And they are welcome best who suffered most."

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" We enter Life but through the gates of Death."

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His eldest son succeeded—James Francis Harry St. Clair Erskine, *Fifth Earl*, born 1869, who died August

10, 1939, and is also buried in the grounds. He was succeeded in 1939 by his grandson Anthony Hugh Francis Harry St. Clair Erskine, born May 18, 1917, Lord Loughborough, *Sixth* and present *Earl of Rosslyn*.\*

Sir Walter Scott in the "Dirge of Rosabelle" refers to a popular tradition of the Chapel seeming all on fire at the death of any member of the family; a superstition that may be of Norwegian derivation, imported by the Earls of Orkney. The Sagas tell of the tomb-fires of the North:—

" O'er Rosslyn all that dreary night,  
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;  
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,  
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

" It glared on Rosslyn's castled rock,  
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;  
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,  
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

" Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,  
Where Rosslyn's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,  
Each Baron, for a sable shroud  
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

" Seem'd all on fire within, around,  
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;  
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,  
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

" Blazed battlement and pinnet high,  
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—  
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh  
The lordly line of high St. Clair."

\* A St. Clair family name from early times.