



THE BINNS

CHARTER GRANTED ON 9TH NOVEMBER 1944
TO
THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND
BY
ELEANOR DALYELL OF THE BINNS

*The first House in Scotland presented to The National
Trust for Scotland under their Country House Scheme.*



GENERAL THOMAS DALYELL OF THE BINNS

THE BINNS

THE BINNS stands on the western slope of two low hills, from which it takes its name, and commands a wide view over the Forth. Tradition tells that the site has been inhabited since Pictish times, and there is written evidence of "the lands of the Bynnis" (in various spellings) from 1335 onwards, and of the existence of an house prior to 1478. In that year an Instrument of Sasine, preserved among *The Binns Papers*, is witnessed by "Archibald Meldrum, son of the late James Meldrum of Bynnis." In 1599 James, Lord Lindsay of the Byris, sold to Sir William Livingstone of Kilsyth "the lands of Manerstoun with the tower, fortalice and manor place thereof, the lands of Bynnis and Croceflattis with the manor place thereof, the lands of Scottistounhill, *alias* Eistir Scottistoun, with the lands of Fluderis and Mirrieleis, with the proper moor thereof, and commonty of the moor of Abircorne and Duntarvie Myre," and in 1612 Sir William Livingstone in turn sold them to Thomas Dalyell, a cadet of the ancient family of Dalzell of Dalzell, later Earls of Carnwath.

In 1601 Thomas Dalyell, who appears to have had the adventurous career of many Scottish younger sons, married Janet, daughter of Edward Bruce, first Baron Kinloss, and accompanied his father-in-law, then Master of the Rolls, to London in 1603 in the train of James VI on his succession to the Crown of England. Thomas Dalyell was Deputy Master of the Rolls and was one of the first of the "hungrie Scottis" to make his fortune in the City of London. On his return to Scotland in 1612 he bought the lands referred to above, and enlarged and decorated the House of the Binns, which has remained in the possession of the family of Dalyell of the Binns ever since.

Their son, also Thomas, was destined to play a leading role in the story of Scotland of the seventeenth century. He was educated at home, probably by a tutor or chaplain as was the custom in those days, and spent three years from 1634 to 1637 travelling on the Continent, largely in France. Shortly after his return, both his father and he signed, on 18th October 1637, the Petition drawn up by the Nobles and Gentlemen of Scotland and addressed to the Privy Council, protesting against the forced introduction into Scottish Churches of the Book of Common Prayer.

Coming of
the Dalyells.

General Tam
Dalyell of the
Binns.

The refusal of Charles I to give heed to the protest strengthened the hands of the extreme party and led to the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant. Then the Dalryells, like Montrose, refused to depart so far from their loyalty to the Crown. Tam Dalryell early adopted a military career and saw service in Ireland against the Parliamentary forces. He was a staunch King's man, who never wavered in his loyalty to the Crown, and when Charles I was executed in 1649, he took an oath never to cut his hair or his beard till the King should be restored. When Charles II was crowned in Scotland, he joined the army raised to invade England, and, as General-Major of Foot, was taken prisoner at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and thrown into the Tower of London by Cromwell, but escaped in the following year and reached the Continent. He returned to Scotland in 1654, but after the failure of the Highland Campaign joined Charles II at Cologne. Furnished with Royal Letters of Recommendation, he entered the service of the Czar Alexis Michaelovitch of Russia. He helped to reorganise the Russian Army, and took part in various campaigns gaining high renown, was promoted to be a General and made a Noble of Russia. After the Restoration, Charles II sent for him and he returned in 1666 and was placed in charge of all His Majesty's Forces in Scotland. He was charged with the suppression of the Covenanting movement and defeated their forces at Rullion Green, receiving a letter in the King's own handwriting of commendation for "the happy success you have had against the rebels in Scotland." He had to use stern measures, and his enemies were wont to refer to him as the "Bluidie Muscovite," but the measures were in accord with the times and by no means confined to the one side. Though he could be ruthless when necessary, the General himself on the field of battle at Rullion Green gave quarter to certain women and children who followed the Covenanting forces, but when they were brought to Edinburgh they were shot. So angered was he by this violation of his quarter, that he resigned his Commission and retired to the Binns, vowing that he would have no more to do with politicians. In 1668 nearly all the troops were disbanded in spite of his warning to the Privy Council against doing so, as he considered another rising inevitable. In the next ten years, he attended only thirteen meetings of the Privy Council and spent his time planting and developing his estate and adding to it several neighbouring properties. In 1679 the rising that he had foretold perturbed the minds of the Privy Council and at their request Charles II commissioned him as Lieutenant-General of the Forces in Scotland, ordering him to train and discipline the troops and to take his instructions from the King, the Privy Council or the Commander-in-Chief, James, Duke of Buccleuch and Monmouth. On the evening of 22nd June 1679 he left Edinburgh to join the army, but news came of the defeat of the rebels at Bothwell Brig earlier in the day. In November Monmouth's commission

His Loyalty
to the Crown.

He fights
Covenant.

Charles the Second
Charles the Second in the name of W. King of Brittain
Francis Duke of the South Sea. To our naturall and beloved Council. The M^{rs}.
Dalyell in writing of our all our Affairs of Brittain & Ireland. At present

Enage our Breach among you that ever Kingdome and these Companies were to be used into them, who are now for
the great experience we have of your good Services need (knowe) I am not for a while support a new
of our said Company. As also I will be glad to see you in the City and there. You are to be kept carefully
Dignity to discharge the Duty of a Councils Office of the said Company respectively by exercising the
same in order both Officers & Soldiers and keeping them in good Order & Discipline. And so we do hereby com-
mand them to stay you at their Island's Company and so we do take care to be in order to stay all such Orders
Directions as you shall from time to time receive from the said Company's most honorable Council. James Duke
of Albany & Clerk of the said Company's Council of Great Brittain & Ireland in presence of the said
Officers & Company's Council of Great Brittain & Ireland.

James Duke of Albany & Clerk of the said Company's Council of Great Brittain & Ireland
James Duke of Albany & Clerk of the said Company's Council of Great Brittain & Ireland
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was recalled and General Tam Dalyell was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He carried out much reorganisation, and on 29th November 1681 received orders from the King to effect certain reductions in the personnel of the companies of infantry and dragoons, and to raise three new companies of dragoons to be regimented with the three reduced companies. He was commissioned Colonel of the new Regiment, which held its first musters at the Binns, and became known as the Royal Scots Greys from the colour of their uniform, for a licence was issued to enable the General to import stone-grey cloth for his dragoons.

He raises
Scots Greys.

Some 250 years later, the Royal Scots Greys camped at the Binns as the first halt out of Edinburgh on a recruiting march through the North, and again watered their horses at the Sergeant's Pond used by them when they were raised. They were met by a descendant of the General, another Tam Dalyell of the Binns.

Greys Camp
at the Binns
1934.

General Tam Dalyell of the Binns was appointed a member of the Privy Council in 1667, but friction between him and the Council was not infrequent, and more than once he appealed successfully to the King against the interference of civilians with his military duties. He attended his last meeting on 20th August 1685, the day before his death. He was buried with military honours, and, after describing the funeral, Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall wrote, "Some were observing that few of our General personis in Scotland had come to their graves without some tach or note of disgrace which Dalyell had not incurred."

His Passing.

Charles II had intended to bestow a baronetcy upon him, but owing to the King's death followed by that of the General, the patent was issued by James VII to his eldest son, also Thomas, on 7th November 1685 and began :—

The
Baronetcy.

“ Know that We, considering the many faithful and distinguished services rendered to Our Royal Father, Charles I, and to Charles II of ever living memory by General Thomas Dalyell of Binns in those military appointments with which (that he might be the more devoted to the Crown) he had been honoured by them and by Us. And because overcoming the difficulties he encountered and patiently enduring losses in fulfilling his appointments, he with distinguished and loyal service ever performed his duty; and especially recalling the very great services rendered to our Royal Brother of blessed memory in November 1666 by the said General Thomas Dalyell in defeateing and suppressing our rebellious subjects who with their associates had then appeared in arms against the Royal Authority to overturn the laws of the Kingdom; and considering besides that Captain Thomas Dalyell, now of Binns, eldest son of the said General Thomas Dalyell, has on every available opportunity afforded sufficient evidence of his eagerness

and readiness to obey our commands, and in promoting our well-being has followed the example of his loyal father. Therefore for these special reasons graciously deciding to confer a distinguished and lasting mark of our Royal favour on the said Captain Dalyell and his family whereby they may be inspired to continue in their duty and loyalty to us and our Royal successors . . .”

and contained the unusual destination to “ heirs male and of tailyie,” in virtue of which the baronetcy may descend through or to the female line.

Succeeding generations have shown the same duty and loyalty to the Crown, in whose service a number have lost their lives. Captain James Dalyell was killed at Fort Detroit in 1763 during operations against the Red Indians. Captain Thomas Dalyell, R.N., was killed in 1765. Midshipman (afterwards Admiral, seventh Baronet) William Dalyell distinguished himself in “ cutting out ” expeditions on the French coast during the Napoleonic wars. On the last occasion (4th January 1805) he was entrusted at his own request with the command of a captured fishing-boat and two other boats, manned by 27 volunteers, for the purpose of bringing out a notorious privateer, the *Vimereux*, of 14 four-pounders and 78 men, including 15 chosen grenadiers from the Boulogne camp, lying at anchor in the bay of St. Valery-en-Caux, close under a four-gun battery.

Later
Generations.

“ Within five minutes from the commencement of the attack the enemy, though fully prepared, were driven below, whence, however, by the aid of an arm-chest full of loaded weapons, they ultimately effected their return to the deck. After a fearful struggle of twenty minutes, the British were finally overpowered by force of numbers, and so great was the carnage amongst them that only six escaped unhurt. The remainder were either killed or wounded. Among the latter was Mr. Dalyell himself, who, after an exciting display of valour, was at length felled to the deck, and then thrown headlong down the main hatchway. On being conveyed to a dungeon on shore, his head seemed hacked asunder, having received no less than nine sabre cuts ; his left foot was found lacerated by a pistol ball ; and three other severe and two slight wounds were discoverable in different parts of his body.”

His case appeared hopeless, but it is believed that he was saved from the dead cart by a Frenchwoman and nursed back to health. On his return from captivity in 1814, he was promoted to be commander and received a presentation sword from the Patriotic Society.

Sir John Graham Dalyell, who was knighted in 1836 in recognition of his services to literature and science, succeeded his brother as sixth Baronet in 1841. His great work, *The Rare and Remarkable Animals of Scotland*, is one of the classics of zoological science and his knowledge of the marine

animals of the Forth, studied during fifty years in the living state, was unrivalled. His beautiful drawings in colour, illustrative of his natural history studies, are preserved at the Binns. He wrote other works of widely different interest, including a *Collection of Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*, various volumes on monastic antiquities and the darker superstitions of Scotland, and on Music.

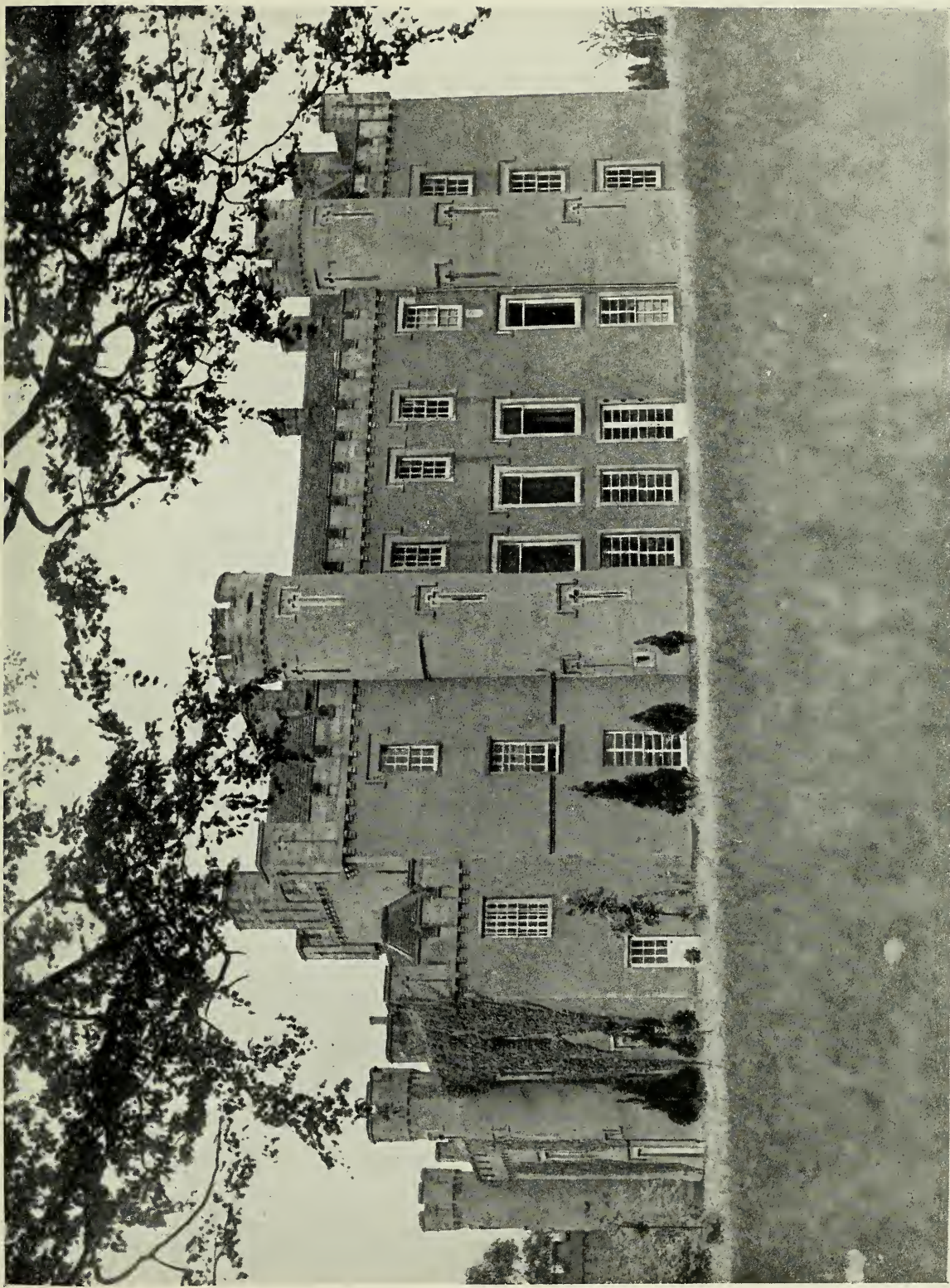
The ninth Baronet, Sir James Bruce Wilkie Dalyell, served in the South African War (1899-1901) and was mentioned in despatches. He rejoined his unit, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, in 1914 and served in Egypt and Gallipoli. His daughter and heir of tailie, Eleanor Dalyell of the Binns, granted a Charter of the Binns to the National Trust for Scotland on 9th November 1944, and gave an Endowment for its upkeep:—

“Considering that I am in sympathy with the purposes and aims of the National Trust for Scotland . . . and that I am desirous that the Binns, with its history and legend and the memory of the family of Dalyell of the Binns, shall be preserved in all time coming for the benefit and enjoyment of the Nation and that I have resolved to grant the charter . . . reserving always . . . the sole right to use the territorial designation ‘of the Binns’ and to fly at the Binns, if and when in residence there, the Armorial Banner of Dalyell of the Binns, and to hold the Baron Court in the Laigh Hall of the Binns and to appoint the Baron Baillie and Baron Officer . . . and to the hidden treasure of the Binns should it be recovered . . .”

THE HOUSE OF THE BINNS

The House of the Binns stands to-day much as it did after Thomas Dalyell had completed its restoration in 1612-1630. Since that time there have been added, about 1745-1750, two rooms (now the dining-room and morning-room) on the south side of the house where the courtyard was and, later, certain rooms on the west wing of the house. About 1810, the old crow-stepping and pointed turrets were replaced by battlements, the work of the architect, William Burn.

There is no record of the old house as it was when Thomas Dalyell bought it, but examination of the layout and walls (especially while re-harling was in progress in 1938) suggests that it consisted of two buildings, now part of the east and west wings, joined on the north by a main building and two towers lower in height than at present. The position of the house and the strong tradition that the site has been inhabited since Pictish times makes it not unreasonable to suppose that



THE HOUSE OF THE BINNS FROM THE NORTH-EAST

these older buildings grew up where in earlier times the Picts had had their dwellings.

Plaster
Ceilings.

The decorations of 1612-1630 included ornate plaster ceilings in four of the main rooms, thought to have been done by those Italian workmen who made the similar ceilings in Linlithgow Palace, destroyed in the burning of the Palace in 1746, or possibly by Italian-trained Scots, as the account was submitted by one, Alexander White.

The King's Room has a deeply moulded frieze of pomegranates and fruit ; on the ceiling medallions of David and Alexander, Kings of Scots, and a heavy lamp pendant ; and over the fireplace the Royal Arms. The Sea Room has a wagon-roof ceiling with heavy pendants, and the ceiling decoration includes portraits in plaster of Thomas Dalzell, General Tam Dalzell as a boy, and other members of the family. The Vault Chamber has a lighter design of caryatids, and the High Hall a geometrical pattern with heraldic decoration bearing the date 1630, and the Royal Arms flanked by those of Dalzell of the Binns over the fireplace.

Great Oven.

In 1938 the plaster was removed from the ground floor room of the eastern gable end to disclose ancient stone vaulting and the mouth of the great oven, some seven feet in diameter, above which is a huge open chimney.

Underground
Passage.

There used to be an underground passage from the Binns to Blackness, but about 1881 Sir Robert Dalzell had it walled up and the entrance filled in, as visitors entering it had been affected by bad air and a dog which had ventured down did not return. The entrance is believed to have been under the eastern tower on the north front of the house, but no one now living remembers the exact spot.

The Tower.

The tower on the hill, which is so conspicuous a landmark, is a recent erection, having been built in 1826 by Sir James Dalzell as a result of an after-dinner wager.

Abercorn
Kirk.

In 1616 a Visitation of the Kirk of Abercorn at the desire of the Bishop of Dunkeld granted authority to Thomas Dalzell to " re-edify " the Manerstoun Aisle, and the Bishop ratified the grant in the following year.

The story behind this Visitation is that Thomas' neighbours, despite the Dalzells of Dalzell coming only from the next county, saw fit to regard him as a " new-rich " from London, and sought to discourage him by refusing him seating accommodation in the Kirk of Abercorn ! Thomas wrathfully approached his kinsman, the Bishop of Dunkeld, and obtained the right to rebuild the aisle, which was, moreover, to have its own door and no communication with the rest of the Kirk. This right remains to the present day, and was specifically recognised some forty years ago, when, during some Church alterations, an opening was made to allow public access through the Binns Aisle, but was closed on representations from Mrs. Cornwall Dalzell of the Binns.



PLASTER DECORATION OF THE KING'S ROOM

LEGEND AND TRADITION

Legend and tradition have gathered round the Binns, and it is now difficult to distinguish tales which may have persisted since pagan times from those of later origin. Many of the stories are now centred round the outstanding personality of General Tam Dalyell.

The Picts.

The hill above the house is said to have been the scene of the last stand of some of the Picts against the Romans, and the figure of a Pict, a little old man in brownish garb who appears to be gathering wood, is sometimes seen on the hillside. The pond below the hill on the west is locally believed to be the abode of a water spirit who seeks to lure his victims into the depths. The original pond, fed by springs and of great antiquity, was enlarged about 1681 to water the horses of the Greys. The hillock by the gate known as the Black Lodge is the reputed abode of another spirit, and it is said that horses often show signs of fear when taken past in the gloaming. Near by a number of stone coffins were found.

Tam and the De'il.

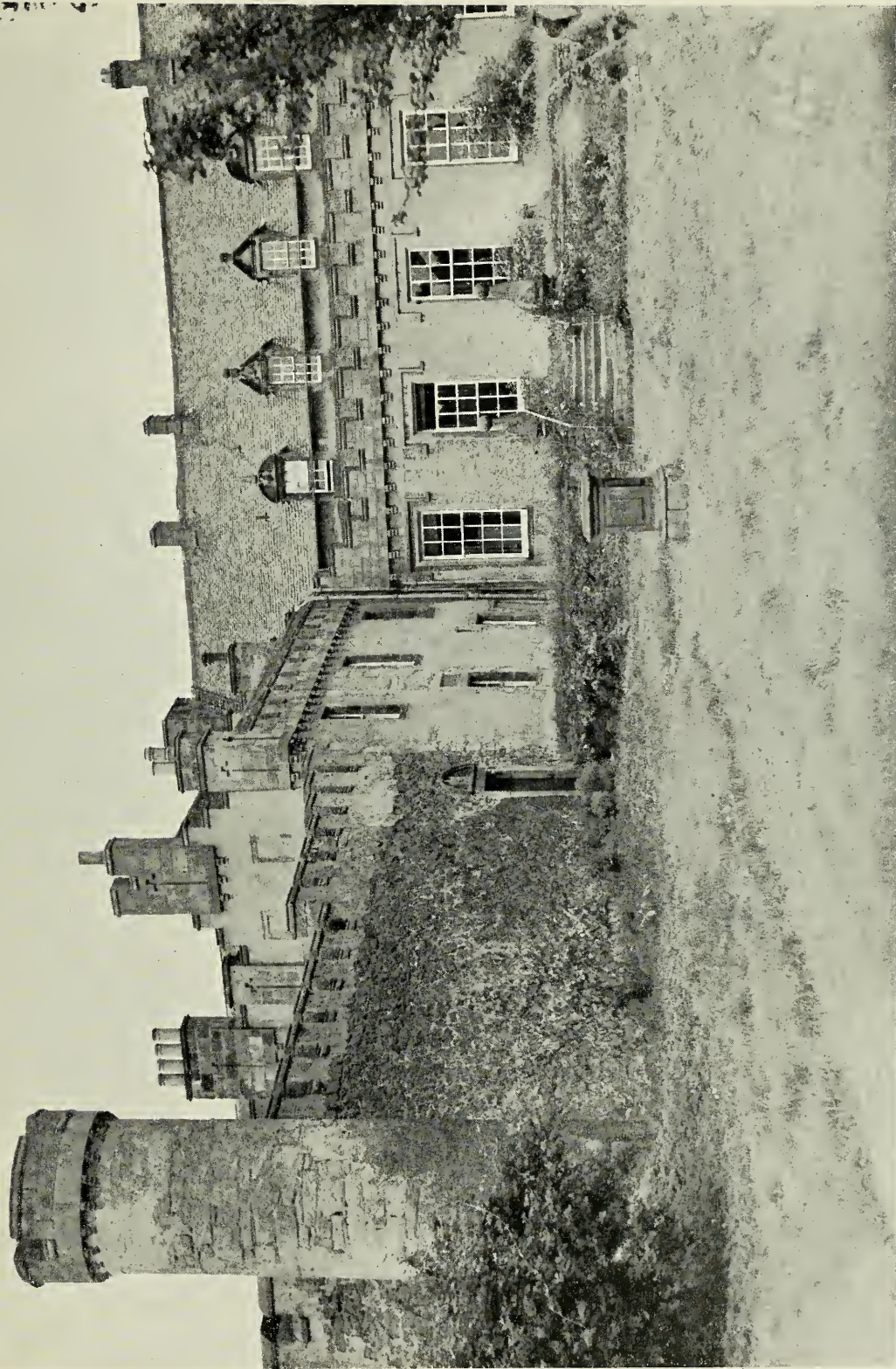
General Tam Dalyell, mounted on a white charger, is said to ride across the ruined bridge over the Errack Burn and up the old road to the house. Many are the stories of the old man's "trookings" with the Devil. How, playing cards, the Devil usually won, but on an occasion Tam Dalyell won, and the Devil was so enraged that he hurled the card table at the General's head. It missed him and fell in the Sergeant's Pond. The story remained a story, but in 1878, a very dry summer, the heavy table of carved marble was recovered from the mud, where it had lain for two hundred years, and is still preserved in the House.

On a day, in the course of argument, the Devil threatened "I will blow down your house upon you," to which the General replied that he would build walls about his house to protect it. The Devil said "That will not avail you, I shall blow down your walls and your house." To this the General stoutly replied "You will not, for I will build me a turret at every corner to pin down my walls." And to this day, there are the walls, and turrets at every corner which serve no other purpose.

Till not long ago, there used to be sung an old ballad, which began :—

" Wha rides roon oor hoos the nicht—
Nane but Bluidy Tam "

and there followed a long series of enquiries as to who had done all manner of evil deeds, to which came the refrain "Nane but Bluidy Tam."



THE HOUSE OF THE BINNS FROM THE SOUTH

But, in spite of popular superstition and the bigoted and rancorous stories put about by the rebels and their partisans, the Inventory of the Plenishing of the House of the Binns given up by his widow at his death in 1685, shows a standard of living, both material and intellectual, unusually high for those times, and includes a library with a catalogue of books, so numerous that a ladder was required to reach some of the shelves. His strength of character, his physical and mental energy, his great courage and military skill, his interest in experiments in gardening and planting trees, some of which still adorn the hillside, show him to have been a truly remarkable man. His much-worn Bible is preserved, and he never swerved from complete loyalty to the King.

RELICS OF GENERAL TAM DALYELL OF THE BINNS

There are at the Binns, General Tam Dalzell's Bible, his sword, his riding-boots, his spurs, his camp spoon and dagger, his leather-covered chair, his "litle trunk covered with selchskins (sealskins)", and the huge comb with which he combed his "beard reaching to his girdle."

The Bible "in the old Scots print" is one of the earliest printed in Scotland, the New Testament in 1611 and the Old Testament in 1613. The sword was presented to him by Czar Alexis Michaelovitch and was borne before him on ceremonial occasions. It is a long two-handed weapon of the fourteenth century, bearing the Passau mark, with hilt pieces in the form of snakes. The camp spoon is of silver and bears his arms and name.

PICTURES

1. King Charles II. By the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland.
2. Thomas Dalyell, 1571-1642. (Jamesone)
3. Edward Bruce, 2nd Lord Kinloss. Brother-in-law of Thomas Dalyell. He was killed in a duel at Bergen-op-Zoom, and his friends embalmed his heart and deposited it in the Bruce Aisle at Culross.
4. General Thomas Dalyell of the Binns :—
 - (a) Head and shoulders, showing his beard “reaching to his girdle”. (Paton)
 - (b) Three-quarter length in armour. (Attributed to one of the Scougalls)
5. Magdalen Dalyell, The Lady Binns, 1673-1732.
6. Janet Dalyell, *m.* 1697 Thomas Shairp.
7. James Menteith of Auldathie, *m.* 1688 Dame Magdalen Dalyell of the Binns.
8. Sir James Menteith Dalyell, 3rd Baronet, 1691-1747.
9. Lady Menteith Dalyell, *d.* 1774.
10. Captain Robert Dalyell, afterwards 4th Baronet.
11. Captain Thomas Dalyell, R.N., killed 1765.
12. Captain James Dalyell, killed at Fort Detroit, 1763.
13. Magdalen, daughter of Sir James Menteith Dalyell.
14. Sir Robert Dalyell, 4th Baronet, 1726-1791. (David Martin)
15. Elizabeth Graham, *m.* 1773 Sir Robert Dalyell, 4th Baronet. (David Martin)
16. Lady Margaret Cunynghame, eldest daughter of William, 11th Earl of Glencairn, *m.* Nicol Graham of Gartmore, *d.* 1790. Mother of Elizabeth Graham.
17. Henrietta, Countess of Glencairn, 1682-1763, daughter of Alexander Stewart, 3rd Earl of Galloway. Grandmother of Elizabeth Graham.
18. Sir James Dalyell, 5th Baronet, *d.* 1841.
19. Sir John Graham Dalyell, 6th Baronet, *d.* 1851 (two portraits).
20. General Robert Dalyell, *d.* 1848.
21. Sir William Dalyell, 7th Baronet, 1784-1865.
22. Maria Sampayo, *m.* 1820 Sir William Dalyell, 7th Baronet.
23. Sir James Bruce Wilkie Dalyell, 9th Baronet.

24. Eleanor Dalyell of the Binns. Granted Charter of the Binns to the National Trust for Scotland, 9th November, 1944.
25. Gordon Loch *m.* 1928 Eleanor Dalyell of the Binns. Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms.
26. Marie Stewart, daughter of Esmé Stewart, Duke of Lennox, *m.* 1592 John Erskine, Earl of Mar. (Her descendant, Frances Erskine *m.* James Loch of Drylaw.)
27. David Erskine, 2nd Lord Cardross. (Great-grandfather of Frances Erskine)
28. Sir John Wilkie of Foulden. Revived the "Silver Bell" of the Lanark Races in 1661 "as being loth so ancient a foundation should perish."
29. Rachel Wilkie, *m.* Sir John Wilkie of Foulden.
30. John Wilkie of Foulden, 1806-1884. (A Brigadier in the King's Bodyguard for Scotland, Royal Company of Archers)
31. Magdalene Kinloch daughter of Sir Francis Kinloch of Gilmerton, Baronet; *m.* 1745 John Wilkie of Foulden.
32. Sergeant Charles Ewart of the Scots Greys carrying off the Eagle of the French 45th Regiment at the Battle of Waterloo, 18th June, 1815. (Clark)
33. Eclipse. Derby winner, 1769. Unbeaten in 18 races, 1769-70. (Stubbs)

S. 44

THE BINNS	Miles (approx.)
to	
Bo'ness	4
Crieff	43
Dunbar	43
Dundee (via Perth)	61
" (via ferry)	52
Dunfermline	12
Edinburgh	15
Falkirk	12
Forth Bridge	6
Glasgow	35
Haddington	32
Kinross	15
Kinross	22
Lanark	48
Lauder	42
Linlithgow	4
North Berwick	39
Peebles	38
Perth	39
St Andrews	48
Stirling	20

The Binns is on the S.M.T.
 Bus Route—Edinburgh—South
 Queensferry—Bo'ness.



GLASGOW

Crieff

Perth

DUNDEE

St. Andrews

Kinross Loch Leven

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 Miles

STIRLING

Kinross Bridge

Dunfermline

Falkirk

Bo'ness

Linlithgow

Forth Bridge & Ferry

EDINBURGH

Haddington

FIRTH of FORTH

North Berwick

Dunbar

THE BINNS

Lanark

Peebles

Lauder