

Sketches of Early Scotch History

Part 7

INCHAFFRAY.

The beautiful valley of Strathearn has some peculiar points of interest for the Scotch historian and antiquary. It contains, in the forts scattered over its lower district, and in the remarkable "round tower" of Abernethy, among the oldest vestiges of civil dominion and of ecclesiastical antiquities that remain to us. The earldom ascends to a high and romantic antiquity, and it was our only county palatine. Its great Earls, of the ancient Scotch blood, held their own, amid the innovations of David I., as the leaders of the Celtic party, and supported their native customs against the new-fangledness of the Saxon and Norman chivalry.¹ The older chroniclers mention them with much of the respect paid to royalty.

Malis was the Count of that time, perhaps the first of the race who accepted the new southern title of honour. He was not a man of parchments; or at least we have no charters granted to him or by him. He was one of the six Earls who attested or consented to the re-erection of the Abbey of Scone, by King Alexander I., about the year 1114; and he witnessed another grant to the same monastery;² one to the cathedral of Glasgow,³ and several charters of David I. to Dunfermline. We know him again only in the lively sketch of the Battle of the Standard, by Abbot Ailred (A.D. 1138).

¹ *Ailred de Bello Standardi*, etc.

³ *Regist. Glasg.* p. 9. The charter

² *Liber de Scon*, N. 1, 3. The second charter is between 1122 and 1124. was granted in 1136.

He wore no armour, but went to battle in his country fashion. He blamed the king for trusting so much to the Frenchmen—"Not one of them, with all his arms, shall be more forward in battle this day than I shall;" and his taunts had nearly led to a quarrel with Alan de Percy, a Norman knight, a follower of David; but the king interposed.

We know no more of the next Earl, Ferteth or Ferquhard. In 1160, he headed a conspiracy of native Scots, irritated at King Malcolm's English counsels. "We will not," said they, "have Henry to rule over us." They assaulted the tower in which the king had sought refuge, and though repulsed, were too powerful and dangerous to be brought to punishment.¹ Earl Ferteth witnessed a charter of King Malcolm about the year 1155.² He is mentioned as alive in a charter to the Abbey of Scone, in 1164,³ and he died in 1171.⁴

With Earl Gilbert, the son of Ferteth, we become better acquainted. He adopted the Norman fashions; took charters for his lands; practised the usages of knightly heraldry; connected himself with Norman families by marriage, and rivalled the most zealous followers of David in his munificence to the church.

Fordun tells us a strange legend,—that Earl Gilbert of Strathearn divided his earldom in three equal parts, one for the Bishop of Dunblane; another he bestowed on Saint John the Evangelist and the canons of Inchaffray; and reserved the third for himself and his heirs

¹ *Fordun*, viii. 4; *Hailes ad an.*

² *Regist. de Dunferm.* p. 24.

³ *Liber de Scon.*

⁴ *Chron. Mailr.*

in his earldom.¹ Though we find no trace of such extreme munificence, it is certain that Earl Gilbert followed the fashion of the age in liberal endowments to the church. The family of Strathearn were the only Scotch subjects who could claim the distinction of having founded a bishopric and inheriting its patronage, unless we except the great lords of Galloway, who appear to have renewed the foundation of the venerable see of St. Ninian.²

Whether we adopt Fordun's authority, and hold it as certain that the see of Dunblane was founded by Earl Gilbert, who succeeded in 1171 and died in 1223, or ascribe its erection to a somewhat earlier period, it might be an inquiry of some interest to endeavour to ascertain from what dioceses the territory assigned to the new see was disjoined. It is not probable that the old bishopric of Cumbria extended at any time farther to the northward than the limits of the later diocese of Glasgow, which appear on all sides to have been marked out by the ancient boundaries of the British people of Strathclyde and Reged. The see of St. Andrews may probably have contributed a portion of its south-western territory to the new bishopric, but it seems likely that the great bulk of its jurisdiction was derived from the diocese of Dunkeld.³

¹ *Scotichronicon*, VIII. lxxiii.

² It was probably on this ground they claimed the right of nominating the Bishops of Whitherne.—*Chron. Lanercost*, 59, 62.

³ The bishopric of Dunkeld, ascending to an antiquity perhaps equal with that of St. Andrews—and (if the obscure in-

timations of the Irish annalists may be trusted) possessing at one time some sort of primatial or metropolitan dignity—even in times comparatively modern extended its authority over a vast extent of country. Until the beginning of the thirteenth century, the whole diocese of Lismore, or Argyle, was included within

Very early in the reign of William (1178-80), Earl Gilbert had a charter of Kinbethach, to be held to him and his heirs, of the king and his heirs, as freely as he held his earldom of Strathearn.¹ Among the witnesses to that charter is a person styled Gillecolm Marescald. A few years later (before 1189) the king granted to Earl Gilbert, Maddyrynin (Madderty), with all its perti-

its bounds.—(*Scotichron.* vi. xl. xli.—*In illo tempore tota Ergadia episcopo Dunkeldensi parebat et ejus jurisdictioni sicut ab antiquo subjacebat.*—*Extract. e var. Chron. Scotie*, p. 80.) And to a much later period the Abbots of Iona acknowledged the Bishops of Dunkeld as their proper diocesans. Abbot Myln, with the records of the cathedral still entire, writes that in the episcopate of William St. Clair, Bishop of Dunkeld during the reign of Robert Bruce, Finlay elected Abbot of Y, received episcopal confirmation from him as his ordinary, at his palace of Tybermuir.—*Vit. Episc. Dunk.* p. 13. The continuator of Fordun relates that in the year 1431, the Abbot of Icolmkil did obeisance (*fecit obedientiam*) to Robert Bishop of Dunkeld.

We may account for this seeming anomaly, which placed one of the Western Isles within a diocese from which it was separated by so great a distance, and by so many natural barriers of sea and land, by supposing that when the Bishops of Dunkeld ceded the western portion of their territory to the new episcopate of Argyle, they reserved Iona to their own jurisdiction, either on account of the dignity which attached to an island illustrious by so many associations, or by reason of the especial reverence in which the memory of St. Columba was had at Dunkeld, where it has been supposed that his bones found a resting-place, and of whose cathedral church he was the patron saint. It does not appear that Iona was at any time of old included within the Norwegian see of

the Isles, which (perhaps even until the fifteenth century) was considered no suffragan of the Scotch church, but owed its allegiance to the Archbishop of Drontheim, and was acknowledged to be within his province. In like manner the see of Galloway, long after the subjection of the province in civil things to the Crown of Scotland, was accounted to belong, in spiritual matters, to the province of York, from whose metropolitan the Bishops of Whitherne received consecration, even after they were permitted to take their seats in the Scotch Parliament, in the fourteenth century.

In the famous bull of Pope Innocent III. (A.D. 1198-1214), recognising the independence of the Scotch church, only nine bishoprics were enumerated as within its limits—St. Andrews, Glasgow, Dunkeld, Dunblane, Brechin, Aberdeen, Moray, Ross, and Caithness.—*Regist. Glasg.* p. 77. Lismore, or Argyle, had not yet been separated from Dunkeld. Galloway was then acknowledged to be suffragan of York; and Orkney and the Isles were, until long afterwards, in the obedience of the Metropolitan of Drontheim.

Some apology may seem to be required for introducing this notice of the jurisdiction of a few of our ancient bishoprics in this place. The subject is not without interest, and the chartularies still remaining to be published may not afford any opening more appropriate.

¹ In the Athol charter-chest.

nents, and with all feudal privileges and jurisdictions, to be held for half a knight's service—but under a remarkable condition—"that no part of the land should ever be sold to Gillecolm Marescall, or his heirs, or any one of his race, seeing the said Gillecolm forfeited that land for felony done against the king, in that he rendered up the king's castle of HERYN feloniously, and afterwards wickedly and traitorously went over to his mortal enemies, and stood with them against the king, to do him hurt to his power." Who this traitor was, who had betrayed the king's castle of Earn, and joined the rebels, it may be impossible to ascertain. Yet the time suits remarkably with the adventures of that "*Gillecolmus archityrannus et latronum princeps*" who kept all Lothian in fear, slew certain nobles, and spoiled their lands, and was at length defeated and slain by Rolland of Galloway, acting as the king's lieutenant, on the 30th of September 1185. The story is told by John of Fordun.¹ It must be remembered, however, that the name of Gillecolm (servant of Columba) was very common.

Earl Gilbert must have been early married to his first wife, Matildis, the daughter of William de Aubegni. Some time before the year 1198, he granted a charter

¹ Lib. VIII. c. xxxix. The conditions quoted above seem to imply that Gillecolm's lineage was of some note. A charter of David I., of the year 1136, is witnessed by *Malodeni Marescal*, by Earl Malis of Strathearn, and many others.—*Regist. Glasg.* p. 9. This may have been the father of the traitor Gillecolm; but it is unsafe to rely on the affix of Marescal as being a hereditary and steady surname. For those who are curious in such inquiries it may be al-

lowed to conjecture that the third generation of the sept is recognised in two Scotch pirates, "William of Mariscal" and "Robert of Mariscal," who about the year 1237 plundered the English traders between Bristol and the Irish ports of Dublin and Drogheda, and for whose apprehension the English king ordered two galleys and a ship to be equipped by the port of Sandwich, and the other ports on the Sussex coast.—*Illustr. of Sc. Hist.* pp. 29, 30.

upon the marriage of their daughter Matilda with Malcolm, son of Duncan Earl of Fife, of the lands of Glendovan and Carnibo, Aldi and Fossedwege (Fossoway), to which charter, Gilchrist their eldest son was a witness. Gilchrist died in 1198.

Before that time, the Earl had founded the house of Inchaffray;¹ but then, the parents having chosen it as the place of burial of their son, they recorded their sorrow in an extended foundation, and more liberal endowment of their monastery. The convent was to be of Augustinian canons regular, of whom a certain Malis the Hermit, in whose piety and discretion the founders had all confidence, was to be the head, and to have the selection. The Earl and Countess declared their affection for the place—"so much do we love it, that we have chosen a place of sepulture in it for us and our successors, and have already buried there our eldest born." It was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist, and was, by its great charter (of 1200) endowed with the churches of St. Kattanus of Abbyruthven, of St. Ethirnanus of Madderty (the parish formed out of the Earl's new manor of Madderty, forfeited by Gillicolm), of St. Patrick of Strogeth, of St. Mechesseok of Ochterardouer, of St. Beanus of Kynkell; with the tithe of the Earl's kain and rents of wheat, meal, malt, cheese, and all provisions used throughout the year in his court; with tithe of all fish brought into his kitchen, and of the

¹ The charter confers on the canons all the escheats and fines of the men of their territory (given them by the Earl) though convicted in the Earl's court. It

is witnessed by the Countess Matilda and their six sons, the last-named being Gilchrist, who died in 1198.

produce of his hunting ; and the tithe of all the profits of his courts of justice, and all offerings. The convent had the liberty of fishing in the Peffer, and of fishing and birding over all the Earl's lands, waters, and lakes. They might take timber, for building and all other uses, from his woods, and have their pannage, or mast feeding for pigs, as well as bark and firewood, in whatever places, and as much as they chose. Some years later, Earl Gilbert granted to the canons, now seated at Inchaffray, the church of St. Beanus of Foulis, with the "dower" land of the church, and the common pasturage of the parish ; and the church of the Holy Trinity of Gask, with the same privileges. The charter conveying the latter grant has still appended to it a fragment of the granter's knightly seal, with a counter-seal of arms, which bears no resemblance to the known cognisance of the family subsequently. By his Countess, Matildis de Aubigny, Earl Gilbert appears to have had at least seven sons, Gilchrist, William, Ferthet, Robert, Fergus, Malis, and Gilbert. The marriage of their daughter Matilda has already been mentioned. Another, Cecilia, married Walter, the son of Alan, the ancestor of the family of Gowrie, and had for her dower the land of Kulgasc. In his old age the Earl took a second wife, Ysenda, the daughter of a knightly family of the surname of Gasc.¹

A chronicle, which seems to have been written in the diocese, or to be in some other way peculiarly connected with Dunblane, records Earl Gilbert's death—"Gilbertus

¹ The original of that charter is still preserved at Abercairney. It must have been granted about the year 1220.

fundator canonicorum Insule Missarum et episcopatus Dunblanensis obiit Anno Domini 1223.”¹

Earl Gilbert was succeeded by his son Robert, who was also the good patron of the canons of Inchaffray. One of his charters, indeed, savours of some estrangement and reconciliation. Earl Robert, in the church of Strogeth, in presence of Abraham, Bishop of Dunblane, Gilbert the Archdeacon, and other notable witnesses, binds himself towards Innocent the Abbot, that he will never in all his life vex the said abbot or his convent unjustly; nay, will love and everywhere honour them, as his most special friends, and will add to the possessions of their house, whatever he may, by the counsel of his friends. In particular, he confirms to them the churches of Gask and Strogeth.

The family of Strathearn, and its possessions, have been so mixed up with the romantic events of Scotch history, that they have been naturally subjected to some exaggeration. The ancient earldom has been described as including “the haill lands lying betwixt Croce Macduff at Newburgh, and the west end of Balquhidder, in length; the Oichell hills and the hills called Montes Grampii, in breadth.”² The Register of Inchaffray, and the charters which accompany it, show that there were many independent lords within that district from the earliest period of record, and almost as early as the earldom can have been held, at least by that title. We even become acquainted with a royal castle of “Earn,” that strength betrayed by the traitor Gillecolme; and it may exercise

¹ *Extracta e Cronicis Scotie*, 92.

² Scotstarvet.

the research of the local antiquary to fix its site. But with due deduction from the magniloquent descriptions of our old writers, the possessions of the family were sufficient to give them a very high place among the great earls of Scotland. It is not, perhaps, to be hoped that the confusion and obscurity that involve the latter descents of the ancient family should be entirely removed, but the documents now collected may be of some service in such an investigation.¹ They cannot fail also to throw light upon the descent of land in the district of the ancient earldom, and the rise of the present possessors of the soil, many of whom owe their establishment there to their connexion with the ancient family. As the documents have been chiefly drawn from the charter-chests of Abercairney and Athole, they naturally bring most into light the ancestors of those two branches of the ancient stock of De Moravia, the former of whom obtained the lands of Abercairney by marriage with a daughter of Malis, Earl of Strathearn; the latter acquired Tullibardine through their intermarriage with the family who appear to have been hereditary seneschals of the earldom.

¹ It is scarcely necessary to warn the reader against giving full confidence to the curious certificate of pedigree sanctioned by the Bishop and Chapter of Orkney for the information of the King of Norway. It comes to us in a questionable shape, through the copy of a remarkably ignorant clerk, evidently unacquainted with the writing and phraseology of old deeds. It is consequently full of errors, and the date is plainly erroneous. But, besides, the nature of the document itself is peculiarly open to mis-

take and mis-statement. It approaches too near to those birth-briefs so common at a later period in Scotland, which were used at first to deceive foreigners ignorant of Scotch pedigrees, and have been the fertile source of error at home, after length of time had rendered it difficult to correct their mis-statements. Deceitful as such documents usually are, they occasionally furnish the most valuable information of events near their own date, and which there could be no object in mis-stating.

It does not appear when the Earls of Strathearn first obtained the rank of Earls Palatine. The style is not given, in any of the documents now collected, during the time of the old family ; though the dependent bishop, and the officer bearing the title of "the Earl's Chancellor," certainly argue somewhat like palatinate privileges.¹ After the ancient line had failed in the direct male descent, and when Maurice de Moray, created Earl by David II., had fallen at the battle of Durham in 1346, leaving no issue, King David bestowed the great earldom upon his nephew Robert, the High Steward, afterwards King Robert II. On his accession to the throne (in 1370), Robert II. granted the earldom of Strathearn to his son David (his eldest son by his second queen, Eufam of Ross), and in his favour, if not sooner, it was erected into a palatinate ; for five years later we find David, styled Earl Palatine of Strathearn, taking part, along with the queen his mother, in a contract of marriage between the queen's sister, Jonet de Monymuske, and Alexander de Moravia of Drumsergarth ; while Walter de Moravia, his brother, is to have to wife (if he choose) the eldest daughter of the said Lady Jonet de Monymuske.²

One at least of the marriages thus contracted took place, and was not fortunate. Only three years afterwards,

¹ Master Richard de Strevyllyn is styled the Earl's Chancellor in 1266. We must remark, however, that the ancient great regalities, and perhaps the great earldoms, had chancellors. Charters of Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, are attested by his chancellor and chamberlain of his regality of Moray. Patrick de Dunbar, Earl of March and Moray, addresses a precept to his chan-

cellor in his earldom of Moray (A.D. 1367), and a charter of John de Dunbar, Earl of Moray, is witnessed by W. de Cheshelme, thesaurar of the diocese, the earl's chancellor. — *Notes of Original Charters.*

² Indenture 1375. It was long ago published by Anderson in the *Diplomata.*

we meet the record of a very curious compact. On the 20th of April 1378, in the parish church of Perth, it was covenanted that Hugh de Ross, lord of Balyndolch, shall make to be brought within the diocese of Dunblane the Lady Johanna (or Jonet), the wife of Alexander de Moravia, at the next coming feast of St. John the Baptist, for which he is to have seven marks beforehand, and seven more when he intimates that he has performed his engagement; and the divorce being completed, he is to receive a similar sum; and the said Hugh promises to give his advice and assistance to the said divorce.¹

The next of the documents collected and published with the Abbey Register furnishes the best illustration of the working of the law of Clan Macduff which has yet been discovered. It appears that Sir Alexander de Moravia was accused of the slaughter of William de Spaldyne, and indicted for the crime in the court of the High Justiciar, held by his deputies, Sir John and Morice de Drummond, at Foulis. On the 7th day of December 1391, he appeared with his forespeakers, protested that inasmuch as he had been once before called in judgment for that slaughter, and re-pledged to the law of Clan Macduff by Robert, Earl of Fife, he was not obliged to plead before any other judge to that charge until the said law of Clan Macduff should have had its privilege in regard to him thus re-pledged to its jurisdiction; and he demanded to be lawfully discharged. The judges made answer that they would not discharge him, but

¹ The word in the original is *deforciamentum*. It may mean the forcible bringing of the lady within the jurisdiction.

would respite him, until the Lord of Brechyn, the principal justiciar, should take order in the matter.¹

The cathedral of St. Blane, originally founded and endowed by the Earls of Strathearn, continued under their protection until the earldom had merged in the Crown, and the bishop and chapter held their lands, annual rents, and temporalities, of the earls, as their feudal superiors. In 1442, James II., in Parliament, declared the earldom fallen to the Crown, and ordained the bishopric temporalities henceforth to be held in free barony directly of the sovereign.²

It was some time afterwards that the last traces of the great civil jurisdiction of the Earls Palatine disappeared. In 1483, Humphrey Murray appeared in the accustomed place of court of the Seneschal of Strathearn, called the stayt of Creiff, and withdrew his suit—*levavit sectam suam de predicta curia*—which was transferred by crown charter³ to the king's sheriff-court of Perth. On the 16th February 1505, Parliament ratified "the creation and making of the baronys of new create and maid within the Kings Earldom of Stratherne, within

¹ The law tradition of the privilege of Clan Macduff is thus given by Skene:—"The croce of Clan Makduffe dividis Stratherne fra Fife abone the Newburgh beside Lundoris. The quhilk had privilege and liberty of *girth*; in sik sort that when ony man-slayer, being within the ninth degree of kin and bluid to Makduffe sumtime Earle of Fife, came to that Croce and gave nine kye and ane colpindach, he was free of the slauchter committed be him." He further tells us—"I saw ane auld evident beand that Spens of Wormestoun, beand of Makduffe's kin, enjoyed the benefit and

immunity of this law, for the slauchter of ane called Kynnymonth."—*De Verbor. Sign. ad Voc.*

There is evidence of the privilege of Clan Macduff having saved Hugh de Arbuthnot and his accomplices from being proceeded against for the slaughter of John de Melvil of Glenbervy in 1421. (*Analect. Scot.* II. 30.) A very curious ancient notice of this privilege occurs in one of the fragments of laws collected at the end of the first volume of the *Act. Parl. Scot.* 382, c. 26.

² *Act. Parl.* II. 58.

³ Orig. at Abercairney.

thir thre yeris last bipast, and relaxit the said baronyis and landis annexit to thaim, fra all service aucht therof in the Stewart Courts of the Kings Earldom of Stratherne, and will that the said seruice be paid in the Kings sheriff court of Perth, in all tymes to cum.”¹

The Abbey of Inchaffray, though respectably endowed, does not seem to have ranked among the greater monasteries of Scotland. The abbots, though prelates of parliament, occur rarely in public affairs, or in the transactions which so frequently brought together churchmen of various religious houses. We have thus only a very few names of the successive abbots preserved.

Malis, a religious hermit, was the person to whom Earl Gilbert committed the selection of the convent at its first foundation in 1200, and he was the first head of the house.

In the General Assembly of the Kirk, convened at Edinburgh the 25th of December 1567, Alexander, called Bishop of Galloway, commissioner, was accused, “that he had not visited these three years bygone the kirks within his charge; that he had left off the visiting and planting of kirks, and he haunted court too much, and had now purchased to be one of the Session and Privy Council, which cannot agree with the office of a pastor or bishop; that he had resigned Inchaffray in favour of a young child, and set diverse lands in feu, in prejudice of the kirk.” The Bishop of Galloway “granted that he offended in all that was laid to his charge.”²

¹ *Act. Parl.* II. 267.

² *Booke of the Universal Kirk of Scot-*

land, 112, 114. For the details of the active life of this trimming prelate, who

The youth in whose favour he had resigned the Abbacy of Inchaffray was James Drummond of Inverpeffray, the second son of David, second Lord Drummond, who was commendator of Inchaffray on the 13th of March 1556, when David Lord Drummond acted with him as his coadjutor. The abbacy of Inchaffray was erected into a temporal lordship in his favour, and he was created Lord Madertie in 1609. From him is descended the noble family of Strathallan.

In 1238, the Bishop of Dunblane had gone in person to the Papal court, and the narrative of the Papal commission proceeds partly upon his information. It sets forth that the see had been vacant for above ten years, during which time its property had been plundered, so that no fit person could be induced to hold the office, until the Papal commissioners had fixed upon the then Bishop, in the hope that through him the church might breathe again out of its slough of misery; that the new bishop had found it so desolate that he had not where to lay his head in the cathedral. There was no chapter; but in the unroofed church, a certain rustic chaplain performed divine service; while the bishop's revenues were so slender, they scarce afforded fitting maintenance for half the year. Upon this statement, the Pope granted commission for assigning to the bishop, the fourth of the tithes of the whole parishes of the diocese, from which he was to reserve a fitting sustenance for himself and to provide

was queen's man or king's man as each party was in power; who was a reformer for the same reason, or that he might legitimate his children and marry their mother; but loved the benefices of the

old church well enough to transmit them to his sons—see the careful and valuable notes of Mr. Duncan, *Wodrow's Biogr. Coll.* 475. Maitland Club Edition. Bishop Alexander Gordon died in 1576.

for a dean and canons to be established by the Papal commissioners. Or otherwise, the commissioners were to assign the fourth of the tithes to the bishop ; to transfer the episcopal see to the monastery of canons regular of St. John (of Inchaffray) ; and to constitute the canons the electoral chapter of the diocese.

It is certain that the alternative of raising the convent of Inchaffray into the chapter of the diocese did not take effect ; and the cathedral continued to be governed by a secular chapter. The Papal commission, contrary to its avowed purpose, produced an abandonment by the bishop of all right of pension out of the lands or churches of the Earl of Menteth, and a permission to the Earl to found a house of Augustinian canons in the Isle of Inchmahomok, with the churches of Lany and of the isle itself for their endowment. The church of Kippen was assigned by the Earl to form a canonry in the cathedral, and he made over to the bishop all right to the church of Callendar.

Our heralds tell us, "the old Earls of Strathearn carried for arms *Or*, two cheverons *gules*:" and undoubtedly the Earls Malis of the thirteenth century bore that coat, as did also their vassals (perhaps too their kinsmen) the family of the Seneschals of Strathearn, from whom the house of Tullibardine is descended. On a seal appended to a charter of Malis Earl of Strathearn the double cheveron is seen both on the shield and over all the housings of the horse. The pretty seal of Muriel, the widow of Malis seneschal of Strathearn, gives a shield of the two cheverons, supported by a man's arm,

on whose fist a falcon is perched. It is represented imperfectly at the end of the Preface to the Register of the Bishopric of Moray. But one seal is preserved of higher antiquity, and of much interest to the herald and genealogist. It is the seal of Earl Gilbert, appended to the charter of Trinity Gask, in the charter-chest of the Duke of Athole, which gives on the obverse a mounted knight with drawn sword, the horse galloping, a housing very short and fitting to the horse's body, ornamented with points below—no coat armour or bearing on the shield; the circumscription mostly gone, but the word *COMITIS* still legible. On the reverse is a small counter-seal, a shield of arms,—eight billets (?) 4, 3, and 1,—with the legend—

SECRETVM · G · COMITIS DE STRADERNE.