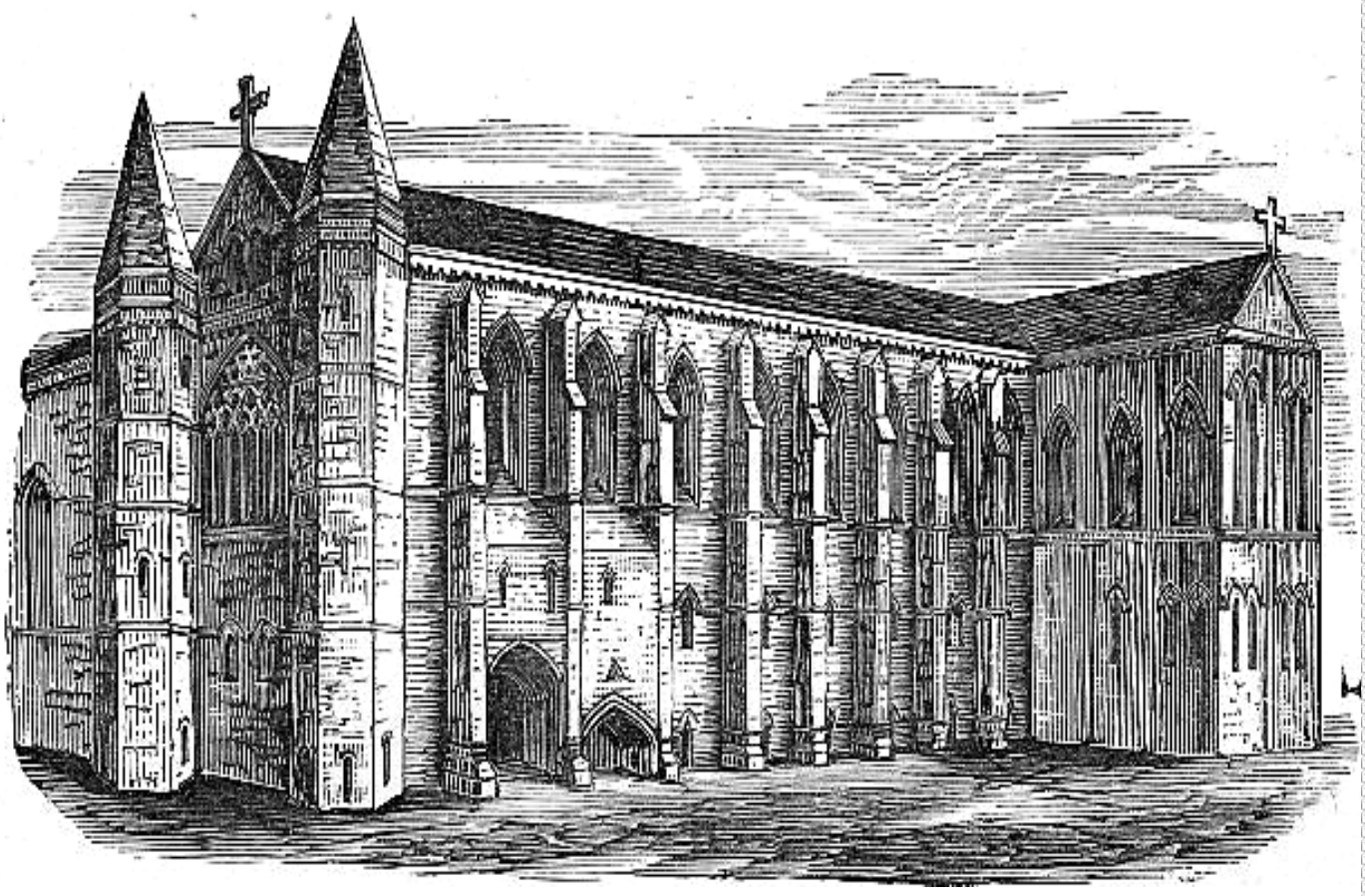
GLEANINGS OF

THE MONASTERY - THE FRATERY

THE REFRECTORY and ROYAL PALACE

OF

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY



CONJECTURAL DRAWING OF THE MONASTERY

Annals of Dunfermline - By E. Henderson

Compiled by Sheila Pitcairn.

PRINTED ON DISC 2013

ISBN 978-1-909634-17-6

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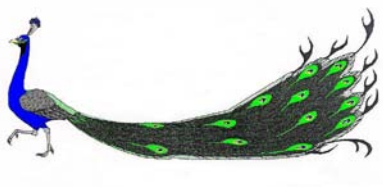
Compiled by Sheila Pitcairn, F.S.A. Scot., L.H G



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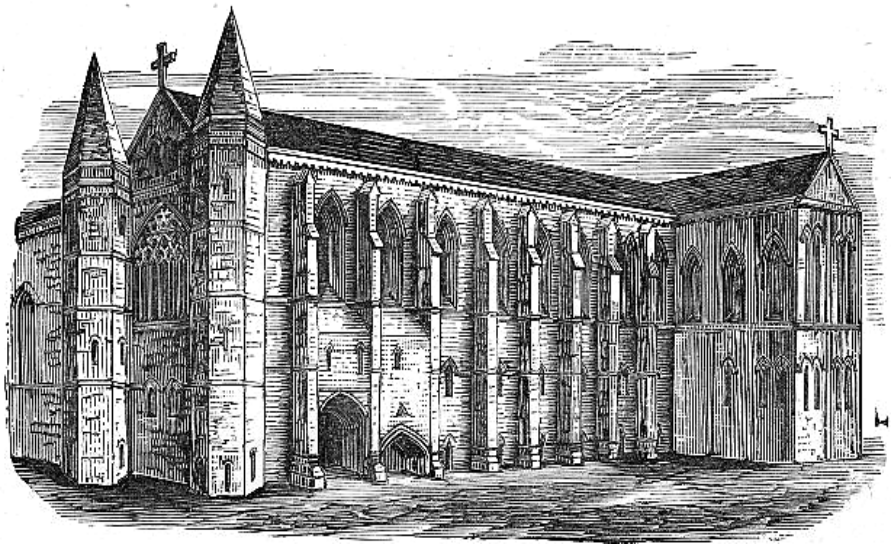


The Monastery of Dunfermline is generally believed to have been founded by King Malcolm III towards the end of the eleventh century. The authority for this rests on King David's confirmation of his father's grants, recorded in the Chartulary, as well as on the fact, of which evidence has been produced, of Malcolm having built a church here, which itself is sometimes styled the Monastery.

The monastery was dedicated, to the Holy Trinity; and Queen Margaret, who died in 1093, was afterwards raised to the rank of tutelary saint. [Historical and Statistical History by Chalmers Vol. 1.p.167-8]

The monastery was situated to the south of the church, the only remaining portion being the south and west walls of the refectory or Frater's hall. In the west wall was a large and handsome window seemingly of fourteenth century work. In the centre of the head-lights there was a peculiar figure some-what resembling a heart, a crown or a monogram, but no satisfactory explanation of its true meaning had yet been arrived at.

*S*AINT *M*ARGARET

National Library of Scotland
Miniature of St Margaret of Scotland from Robert Blackadder's
Prayerbook. France c 1490. MS. 10271. f.101.

At that point there was a connection between the monastery and the palace, in the form of a massive pended tower, underneath which the public road now passed. The ground to the north of that "pend" was the palace yard – a large open space between the abbey and the palace, and upon which both fronted. At the north side of that yard there was another pended tower, in which was the north gate of the palace. [The Architect Sept. 14 1888]

The work of destroying Dunfermline Monastery commenced on March 28 1560.

The Order of St. Benedictine or Bennet, named after its founder, an Italian priest, in the latter half of the fifth century, had attained for itself a position of high distinction the Roman Church before it was represented in Dunfermline. For two or three centuries it was the most prominent and powerful of the monastic institutions. Thanks to the piety and activity of its members, its rules of service were

framed with a view to the promotion and preservation of the devotional spirit, the exercise of the virtues of humility and obedience, and the enrichment of Mother Church. The members of the Order were required to take part in seen service s daily-the first beginning shortly after midnight, and lasting from one to two hours. During these services the monks were enjoined to sing as if they felt themselves were in the presence of God and His angels.

Religious instruction and exercises were associated even with their feasting. As they sat in their spacious refectory, one of the brethren occupying the little room still discernible in the long wall of the Frater Hall, read suitable passages from a MS. Copy of St. Jerome's Latin Bible, which now forms one of the treasures of the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh. It is believed this Bible was in constant use in Dunfermline Monastery from 1124 till the destruction of the buildings in 1560.

The Monastery was first and foremost a religious house, in which the religious services, though numerous and exacting, were not destitute either of decorousness or brightness; but it was also an industrial establishment. The monks sewed their own garments, cultivated their own gardens, grew and ground their own corn, and they performed and necessary domestic duties. They served weekly by turns in the kitchen and at the tables. They did their own cooking and cleaning. They washed each other's feet and also the linen used for the wiping of the feet. They ministered to each other in sickness. Habituating themselves, to a life, in which personal wants were reduced to a minimum, they avoided as a rule sumptuous fare. They did not lack generous provision given them by pilgrims and worshippers, but their plan of life restrained anything like extravagance. Their austerities included, for some of them at least, the wearing of horse hair shirts and the carrying on of their studies or literary work, in uncarpeted cells. Their beds were unblanketed, for they slept in their clothes, so that they might always be ready for their religious exercises, and they were required to stand bare-headed in the place of tombs as they prayed for the souls of departed brethren. Yet, the need for a sound body for the lodgement of a religious mind was not overlooked; the brethren had their baths for the preservation of cleanliness of person, and their bowling alleys for healthful recreation.

To a certain extent the monks were a self-governing as well as a self-serving community. They were entitled to be consulted by their superior, and to give him advice on subjects of perplexity and

difficulties, but though they were privileged to attend conferences held by the Abbot, the will of the head of the Monastery was accepted as law. Disobedience and murmuring were punishable by temporary ex-communication, corporal punishment, and by expulsion in the event of obstinate defiance. When members joined the Order they were expected to contribute to the common stock, and those who brought estates with them were forbidden "to be more puffed up with pride than others;" while the Abbot himself was enjoined not to pride himself of his dignity, but to show all the qualities of a good father towards inferiors. The principles of autocracy and democracy were happily unified; and the plan of self-government adopted provided service for all the members, in order to make the establishment as nearly as possible independent of outside aid. While the more scholarly men were encouraged to prosecute private studies, the expert calligraphers were employed in the transcription of the scriptures or other religious writings – one monk in the scriptorium sometimes reading aloud while the skilful scribes made their respective copies. Others pursued practical occupations or discharged menial duties. Included among the officials were the Cellarer, the Refectioner, and the Almoner, the Marshall, who had charge of the stables, the Master of Works, who supervised the buildings, the brewer, the baker, the carpenter, the forester, the huntsman, and other officials, along with lay assistants, who when they were married men required to live outside the gates. When business had to be done outside the walls, the black-robed monks went out in couples, and in their commercial dealings with the people they were directed to be "conscientious in all they sell, and faithful in what they buy."

The first Abbot, Gaufrid, formerly prior of Christ's Church, Canterbury, was a man distinguished for his piety, and if all his successors failed to earn this record, their shortcomings and transgressions cannot be attributed to the rules which were adopted for the regulation of the monastic life. Secularising influences were constantly at work; but in the midst of the tendencies to depravity, excited by personal ambition and selfish spheres with which it often became entangled because of its worldly possessions, the more saintly virtues were never wholly extinguished. A singing example of self-sacrificing loyalty is afforded in the record of the 17th Abbot, John Blak, who in 1353 was by choice of the Convent, and with the license of the King and also the bishops of the diocese, elevated from the office of Cellarer to the chief place. Meanwhile, a young

monk, John of Stramiglaw, who was studying at Rome when the former Abbot died, hastened to the Pope at Avignon, and returned to Dunfermline with the Papal Bull, appointing him to the Abbacy. The local appointment was popular for the character and talents of John Blak recommended him strongly to his fellow monks; and John of Stramiglaw, when he presented his Papal commission was regarded as a selfish schemer and usurper.

A conflict with Rome seemed inevitable. The story of the escape from strife is beautifully told in a poem published at this office several years ago by Mrs. Matheson of Glendevon, who to exceptional gifts as a poetess adds a remarkably intimate acquaintance with old-world life and learning. Mrs Matheson, after justifying the choice of the monk to whom work "was sweet as prayer," and who by "perfect life and saintly deed" had developed a great soul "in simple guise," proving himself a Black Monk worthy of his creed," gives a touching and inspiring portraiture of the spiritual emotion which led the humble-minded man first to accept as divine the charge which had been committed to him, and then in obedience to the law of Christian charity to surrender it. The arrival of John of Stramiglaw with his Papal Bull was a great shock to him, and when he summoned the brethren to conference with him, passionate indignation was excited. John Blak vowed that -

"Not papal Bull itself shall wrest
The crozier by my brethren given."

And his loyal colleagues warmly commended his resolution: -

"Then, many a Black Monk spoke his ire, -
And shall our Rule inviolate;
Thrice sealed of chapter, church and state,
Be ruptured for one monk's desire?"

"These were but gives, `neath gifts and flowers,
That Rome has forged for many a day;"
And shall one alien yea or nay,
Upset election's ancient powers?

The chapter in assertion of their independence of Rome for which the good King Robert had fought, as well as for national freedom, resolutely repudiated for Pope's commission. The Abbot,

realising now the seriousness of the issue as he struggled to obtain the mastery over self asked for time for reflection. Pleading his love of peace, and his desire to be governed by the principle – "The Abbey first, the Abbot last" – he induced the monks to consent to accept the decision to which he might arrive after his vigil. When the adjourned conference met, in the presence of Stramiglaw, "the monk of God, whom God's monks crowned," stood in mitred state and -

"Lo! Ere his foe the silence broke,
Confused before his holiness, -
With hand upraised as if to bless
These gentle words the Abbot spoke.

`Peace be to thee! Peace `twixt us twain,
For peace is ours in all the past,
The Abbey first. The Abbot last,
Be not Dunfermline loved in vain. `

He took the mitre from his head,
And set it on his rival's brow,
With reverence wrapped around his foe,
His vestments of memorial red.

Around him clasped the broidered cope,
Upon him crossed the pearl-bright belt,
And hailing him, Lord Abbot, knelt
Before the mitred of the Pope.

Lo, there he knelt, the monk of God,
`Ethereal-thin in gown of white,
O all his golden trappings light,
His own brief path of glory trod.

Men saw the plighted spirit now,
Of all Rome's vain adornments rid,
The splendent mitre had but hid
The hallowing thought of his own brow."

If any Dunfermline boy or girl be tempted at times to think that sympathy with the Reformation requires or justifies the cherishing of unkindly thought regarding the old monastic life in the beautiful building, whose ruins are now piously cherished, let the

recollections of the nobility of John Blak, as described by Mrs. Matheson, restrain the condemning spirit. Let it be remembered, too, that Arnold Blair, who assisted Wallace at the burial of the hero's mother in Dunfermline Churchyard, and who afterwards wrote the life of the champion of national freedom, once lived as a Benedictine brother within the sacred building. And when the generosity with which the monks displayed their hospitality to pilgrims and strangers is recalled, let the pitying tear be shed over the destruction of the Monastery by King Edward, the Hammer of Scotland, after he and his retinue had been right regally entertained on three or more occasions in the magnificent Refectory. What is the testimony of the English historian: -

"On account of the magnitude of the place, the Scottish nobles were wont to convene here, and to contrive their plots against the King of England, and in time of war issuing thence as from their places to ambush, proceeded to plunder and destroy the English inhabitants. The royal army, therefore, seeing that the temple of the Lord was converted from a place of sanctity into a den of thieves, and was become an eyesore to the English nation, utterly destroyed its noble edifices by levelling them to the ground."

In this wholesale destruction the literary treasures of the Monastery perished with the building. The sentiment of righteous indication exited by the sacrilegious deed of the warrior, who had previously sought to justify his harshly cruel treatment of Wallace by falsely representing him as a spoiler of churches, is fittingly expressed in his historical poem – "Dunfermline Abbey." By Andrew Mercer, a not unworthy successor of Robert Henryson as a schoolmaster in Dunfermline: -

"Edward! for this and all th' atrocious deeds
Thou wrought'st on Scotland in thy fierce career,
As oft as sounded into northern ear
Thy hated name, deep execration breeds."

Not a little piety and patriotism continued to characterise the monks who sheltered in the remnants of the buildings after King Edward's spoliation. Bruce did not lack the encouragement and assistance of the holy men, whether he was fighting against English domination or resisting the crafty statesmanship and selfish intrigues of Rome. Gradually, however, the secular influence enfeebled and overcame the spiritual. Avaricious lords

and sovereigns seized and abused the patronage of the monastic offices for the sake of the revenues attached to them; and as the Abbot became more and more the creature of the court, the religious life of the Monastery declined in 1560. To the insidious and persistent assertions authority on the part of the Papacy, which as early as the twelfth century issued a bull declairing the Scottish Church to be subject to Rome only, and which in 1275 deposed Abbot Simon on the grounds of "obstinacy and crossness to the poor," was gradually added during the centuries the encroachment of secular lordship. Doubtless the better part of valour was shown by Abbot Ralph, "mild, cautious, and well trained in monastic discipline," when he swore fealty to Edward I. in 1291.

The English monarchy, however, was not the only aggressor.

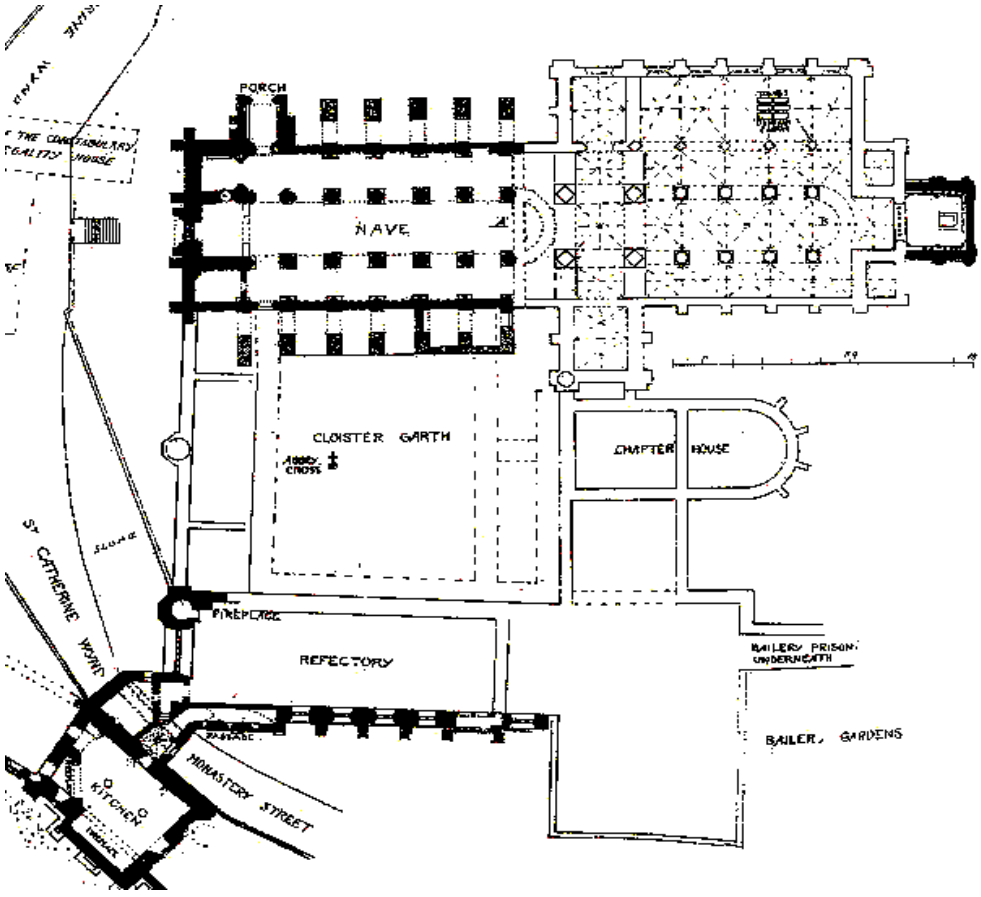
Setting aside the choice of the Convent in 1474, King James III appointed Henry Creighton to the Abbacy, and made him a Lord of Parliament in virtue of his office. George I, one of his successors, was also made a Lord of Council, and by and bye the sovereign exercised these usurped rights of patronage in favour of members of the Royal Family or of court sycophants. Thus James Stuart, the second son of King James III, was given control of the Monastery in perpetual commendams, and seven years after his death the office was assigned to his nephew, Alexander Stuart, a natural son of King James IV, who represented the church militant at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, where he was one of the devoted band who formed the body guard of the Sovereign, and died fighting in his defence. About this period two men, whose names figure prominently in Scottish history, held the Abbacy for considerable periods, viz., James Beton or Bethune, who directed the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton at St. Andrews, and Andrew Foreman, who had rendered high political service as one of the negotiators of the marriage of James IV, with Margaret Tudor out of France, concluded the Treaty which undid the political aims of his earlier mission leading to James's invasion of England, and to the dire disaster at Flodden.

George Dury, the last of the churchmen who held the office, also attained high position in political service, but his influence was by no means helpful to the spiritual life of the Monastery. The time for change was ripe when the reformers completed the work of demolition, King Edward had begun. Happily, most of what was good in the monastic establishment with its subsidiary chapels, passed into the service of the Presbyterian Church.

The Passing of the Old Order.

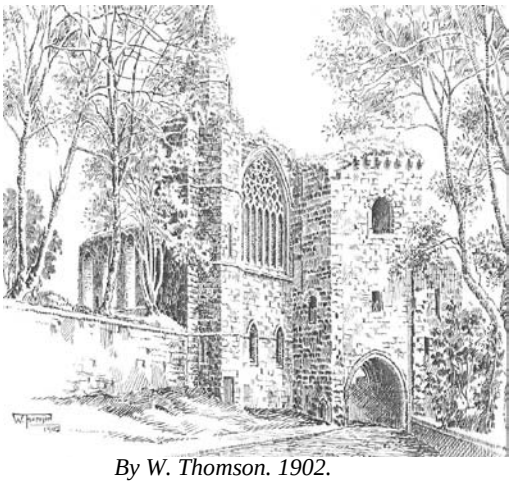
"Temples may fall, and Powers and States,
But Heaven's everlasting gates
Shall stand each hostile shock.
The Church of Christ can never fall –
Firm stands its Heaven protected wall, -
`Tis founded on a rock."

The ecclesiastical buildings in Dunfermline suffered a great deal at the hands of King Edward and of the Reformers, but in spite of spoliations and demolitions irreverent neglect, and the wasting hand of time, they are still the centre of Christian worship. On the spacious staircase leading from the Old Abbey to the New, one realises that though the old order has changed yielding place to new "verbum Domini manet in aeternum." In human life there are many partings of the ways, but there are also meeting places of the ages and of systems, and within the Abbey old and new are united memorials of an imperishable past with present day religious testimonies which have the promise of never-ending life. [Dunfermline Historical Idylls p.57-67 by J. B. Mackie Dunfermline Carnegie Library]



The Monastery, between the south sides of this enlarged building and what is now called Monastery Street there stood a range of buildings, which has by this time largely disappeared. From the two ancient doorways seen in the south wall of the church there stretched two covered passages or pathways called the cloisters, and along the westmost and west from it was the dormitory of the monks, while at the south end was their refectory or dining-hall, part of which is still seen, with its beautifully-carved western window.

Robert Somerville. *Dunfermline sketches and notes*



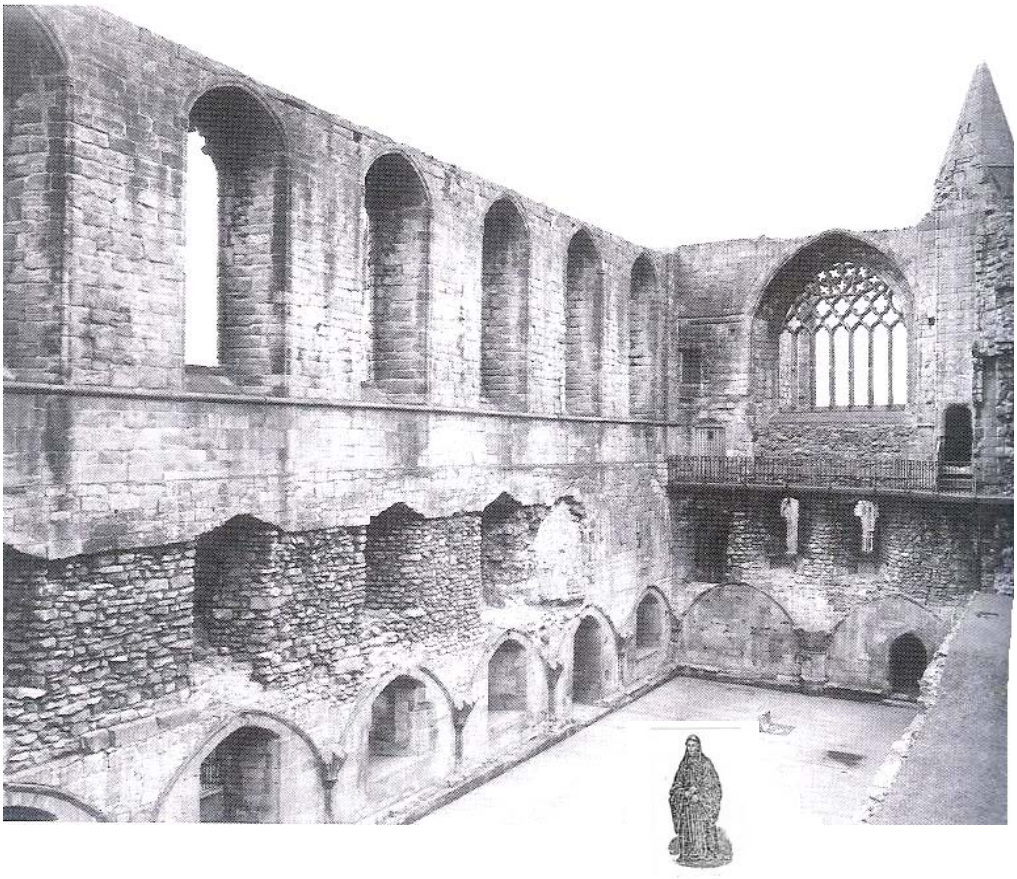
. *By W. Thomson. 1902.*

The cloister yard was enclosed by these two pathways and other two – one parallel to the Abbey and near it, and the other close and parallel to the dining-hall. On the east side would be the chapter house with some other apartments, and underneath the refectory, as now seen from Monastery Street, a large amount of accommodation devoted to cellarage and the various purposes of hospitality which the conditions and wealth of the Abbey necessitated. For water supplies there was the stream from the Town Loch passing through their grounds. Among the appurtenances was a room set aside for the imprisonment of defaulters. [Dunfermline Abbey by John Marshall p.19]

THE FRATER HALL

An old chronicler, Matthew of Westminster, avers that the foundation was so vast, and contained palaces so magnificent, that it could give accommodation to *three* Kings, with their attendant trains! Certainly, the "Registrum de Dunfermlyn" makes it clear that King David's English monks were regally endowed; and that they were royally housed follows both as a matter of course as of evidence. For centuries they seem to have flourished here as missioners and administrators, but in graver times unhallowed hands were laid on their monastic home. King Edward I, made sure that no other conquering head would rest within the stately pile he burned to the ground in 1303, and other of his kind are credited with the like ruthless destruction of its successor. But, phenix-like, the monastery rose from its ashes ever grander than before, its ruins speaking well for their art and skill who reared it on 15th century lines. Doubtless, the older walls formed the substructure of the later operations. Some portions of the southern fabric may be centuries older than the picturesque superstructure; but, broadly speaking the remnants bear the clear impress of the gothic style and workmanship common toward the close of the 15th century.

RUINS OF THE REFECTORY



From old records and plans we learn that the monastic buildings covered the entire area lying between the church and the southern wall of the refectory. The sites of the cloisters, chapter-house, dormitories, etc., are lost under the modern burial-ground, the formation of which also conceals the fact that these structures had occupied a level considerably lower than that on which the church was raised. The south and west wall so the noble refectory, or Frater Hall, remain almost entire, the west gable showing in a seven-light traceried window as fine an example of artistic fenestration as Scotland possesses.

The apartment in which this celebrated window was "a thing of beauty" was in every respect worthy of its presence. Over 100 feet in length, 34 feet in width, and proportionately lofty, its walls were divided into well-marked bays, tall Gothic windows giving grace and lightness to these compartments. The eastmost bay is of singular beauty and interest. Here the window is double, its mullions and tracery remaining wonderfully complete. In its general arrangement, also, this charming feature diverges from the architectural plan of its neighbours, and points to the special function for which, clearly, it was designed.

Here. In the good old days, was placed the desk or pulpit of the monk whose duty it ws to read aloud to his brethern at meals assembled. The custom ws as old as the monastic system, and ordained the reading of Scripture, or some pious prelection from the Fathers, so that the minds and bodies of the listeners might simultaneously be cheered. Outside as well as inside the walls, this *pulpitum* recess is beautifully designed and worked, the cusped arch which supports it between the exterior buttresses being particularly attractive.

A good collection of local antiquities once found a home within the tower that forms a bond of union between the monastic buildings and the palace. These relics have lately been removed and now form a portion of the varied contents of Pittencrieff House. They are well worthy of examination, for, in addition to their archaeological interest, they represent the culture of Joseph N Paton, whose sons, Sir Noel and Walter, rose to distinguished positions in the realms of art. The tower is in itself an interesting structure, and is entire but for its termination.

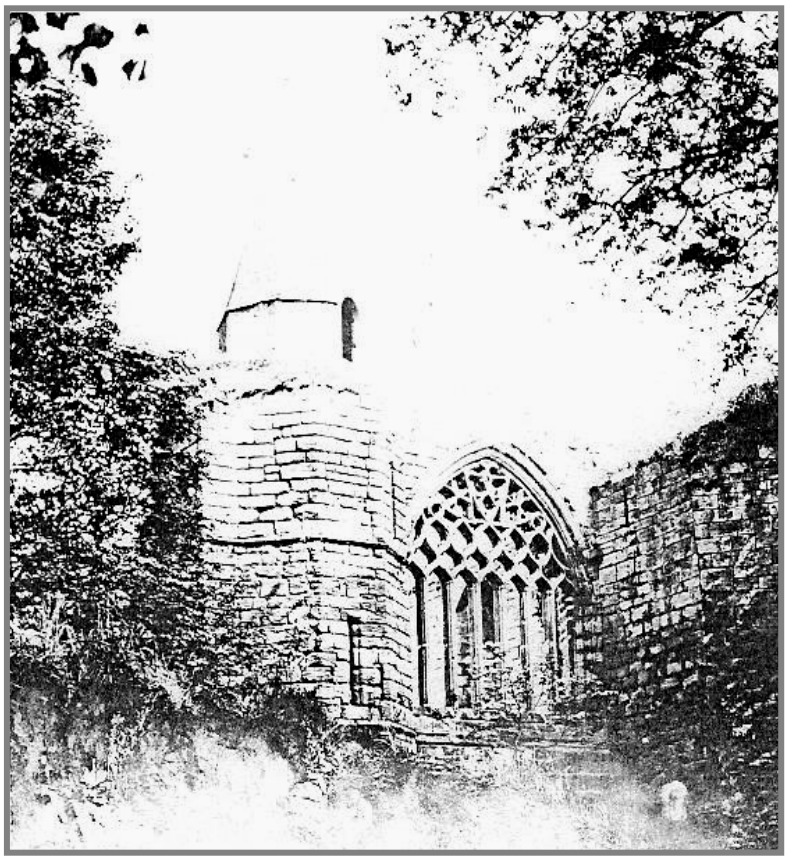
That was probably a crown-stepped cape house, such as surmounted the keeps and church towers of "baronial" days; and that it was surrounded by a bartizan is evident from the corbelling still *in situ*. The groined roof and the fireplace of the fine old upper

chamber are effectively ornamental, thus showing that the structure had been designed for purposes of some importance. As has been indicated, it formed a link of communication between the palace and the monastery, and it has been suggested that its lower chamber, at least, had been the quarters of the Royal guard.

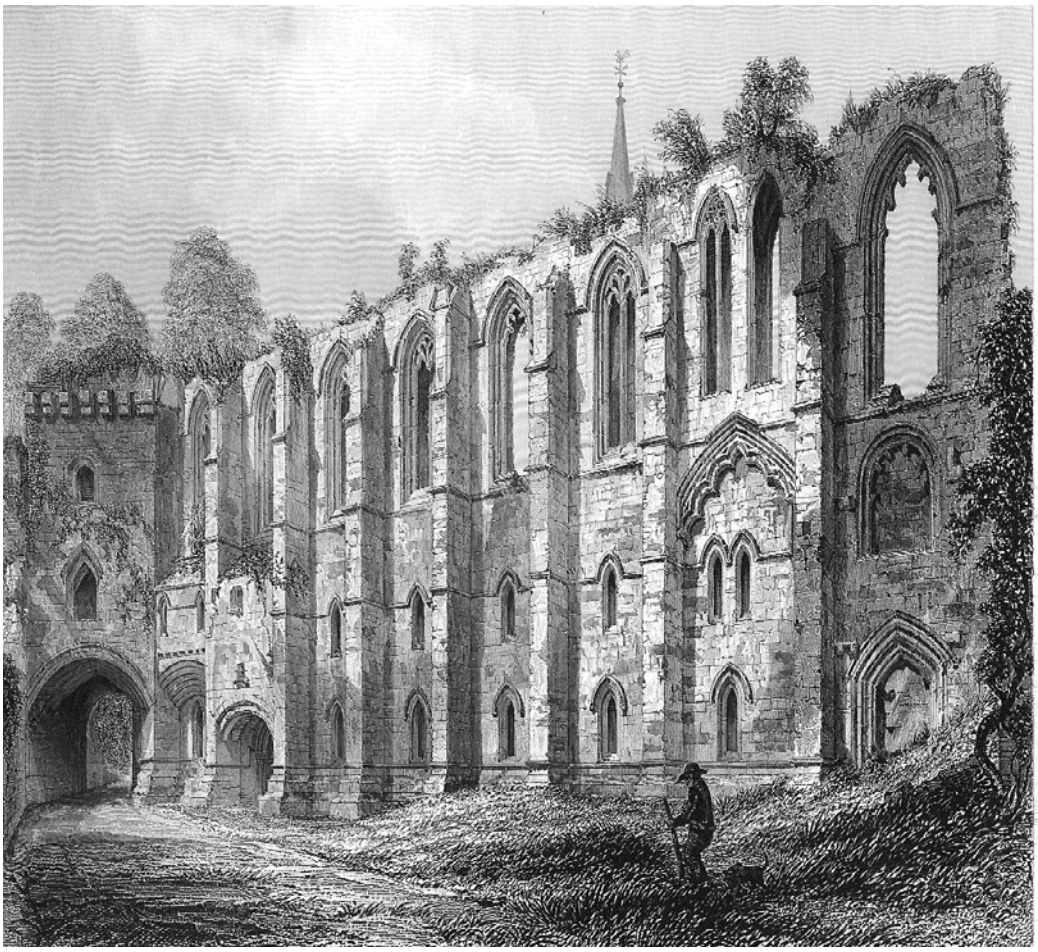
From several points of view, the exterior of the tower is very picturesque. It forms an arched pend over St Catherine's Wynd, and in its junction with the monastic buildings on its elevation to Monastery Street, it shows clearly that the refectory walls are venerable when compared with those of the tower. The visitor should note the arched and corbelled walls interpolated between the western buttresses of the refectory. These contain a staircase and a connection passage leaning from the guard-room over the pend to the vaulted chambers under the Frater Hall. The original entrances to these closed spaces are still visible at different points in the great south wall, whose whole surface is rich in excellent, thought much worn architectural details.

The elegant octagonal staircase tower which flanks the west window of the refectory is seen in its entirety from St Catherine's Wynd. This stair, long since destroyed, gave access to the hall room the level of the palace grounds, and led by the roof of the refectory to the rampart round the pend tower.

WINDOW OF MONASTERY, DUNFERMLINE, 1868



FRATERY FROM THE SOUTH

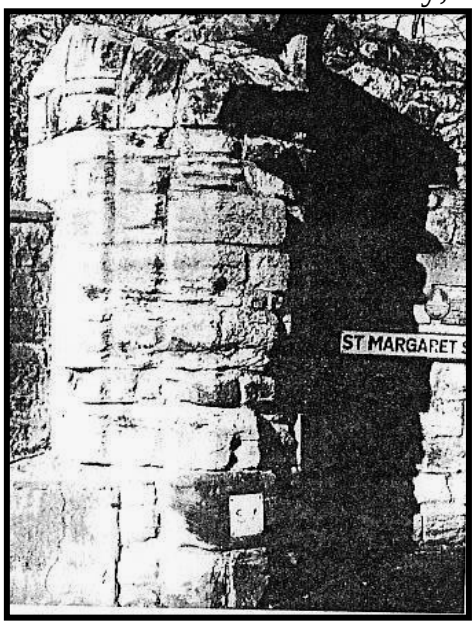


It is somewhat difficult, among these ruinous fragments of a great structure, to realise the gallant part played by the monastery in the story of the past. As a conventual establishment, the Dunfermline foundation was complete and extensive as any in the country, and the Abbot at its head exercised an influence almost princely in its scope and power. The lordly style of living and entertaining seen within these crumbling walls when the monastery was in the heyday of its prosperity is perhaps even more difficult to imagine. But we may realise something of its splendour when remembering that the Scottish Parliament found it necessary to enact measures regulating the number of courses that an Abbot might place upon his hospitable table and that because, in many cases, the entertainments of Royality itself were cast into the shade by the luxurious provision of the religious houses. King David's original provision of a dozen monks from Canterbury blossomed into a stately Chapter of enormous wealth and power, whose rule extended far and wide beyond the bounds of their stately Dunfermline home.

The story of the Abbacy is fully recorded in Chalmer's "History of Dunfermline." It is most interesting in its presentment of the ecclesiastical and political achievements of the long line of Abbots who ruled over the Benedictine brethern of this famous monastery. Their distinguished line originated with Galfrid, a monk of Canterbury, was continued through translations from other monasteries and promotions among the brethren, and continued till George Dury died, amid the tremors of approaching reform. The end came, both of Abbots and Commentators, in 1593, when all monkish organisations were abolished, their great estates being vested in the Crown, or resigned to the hands of those who were clever or strong enough to seize and retain them. Thus, desolate and neglected, the ruin of Dunfermline monastery seems to have been due to iconoclasm more than to the ravages of time. Still, in the presence of many evidences of gross vandalism, what sentiment is more fitting that the expressed by the local poet? –

Yet what remains excites the mind
To muse on ages past;
Ages that never can return,
And times too good to last."

The great extent of the mastery cannot be correctly estimated from the remnants near the Abbey, even though allowance be made for the range of buildings that extended eastwards of the refectory, and is still traceable in parts. The ruined pier of a Gothic Gateway, an interesting relic of the ancient boundaries, may be seen at the foot of Gibb Street (now St Margaret's Street) and near to the Carnegie birthplace.



THE KING'S CELLARS

Limekilns & Passagium Reginae p.60

A number of dark, barrel vaulted cellars, used until a recent date in connection with a wine merchant's business in Maygate, were probably part of a monastic storehouse; and at Limekilns and interesting old building, known as the "Vout," links the monastery with the Forth. Limekilns was the seaport of Dunfermline and its "Vout," or Vault, the clearing-house for the monastic supplies unshipped at its ancient pier. The great Robert Pitcairn died at Limekilns, and his arms, with the date 1587 (1584). may be seen over the doorway of the quaint old building. This interesting carved stone was removed from the deserted residence of the Commendator to adorn the new portal of Limekilns "Academy, for on such a base tutorial usage did the monkish cellars fall. A plain, lofty pointed vault of stone covers the long, narrow upper storey of the "Vout." In 1910 the Right Hon. The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, C.M.G., converted the ancient building into an Episcopal Chapel and Masonic Temple. [Royal Dunfermline by Alan Reid p.36-47]

MONKS OF DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

There are many references to the monks of Dunfermline before and after the Reformation.

Bishop Sinclair of Dunkeld commissioned John Blair, who was Wallace's confessor, and who became a monk in Dunfermline to write the biography of Wallace.

<><><><><><><><>

There is an interesting connection between the lands of St Margaret's Stone and a certain John Durie, at one time a monk of Dunfermline, a cousin, or nephew of the last Abbot George Durie.

"On the eve of the Reformation, he became suspect in respect of the new teachings. Tradition has it that the Abbot immured him between two walls till he died. But that is quite without foundation. He became an outstanding preacher of the New Faith and was for some time minister of St Giles Edinburgh. It seems to have been the case, however, that he did not receive at the time either the `portion` that was his due as a monk, or the `pension` that was given to the other monks of Dunfermline on their dispersion. To correct this injustice, the King granted "to oure weil-belovit John Durie, minister of Chrystis evangill, sum tyme ane of the conventuall brethir of our sid abbay, and to Josua Dury, his sone, and to the langer levar of thame twa, for al the dayis of thair lyftymes, all and haill ane yeirlie portion and pension of the soume of 66 pundis 13s. and 4d. in place of his portioun habite sylver and utheris dewties

aucht to him out of the said abbay befoir the dispersion of the brethering thairof."

Power was given to the recipients to transfer the said gift at any period of their lives, `etiam in articulo mortis`. For the annual payment referred to, the lands of St Margaret's Stone were drawn upon to the extent of £10. 4. 6. [The Lands of St Margaret's Stone by J.W. Webster]

One of the most popular Preachers in Edinburgh; but because George Durie the Abbot of Dunfermline Abbey was no respecter of persons in his campaign against what he considered to be heresy, he even has his nephew John Durie, a Dunfermline Monk brought to trial for heresy. The Monk was sentenced to be built up between two walls "until he died." But through the good offices of the Earl of Arran he was set at liberty.

The priest became a Reformation Hero, and one of outspokenness King James made an example of him, and he was banished from the city. On his return, he was met at Leith by two hundred residents of Edinburgh. The demonstration had increased to two thousand by the time the Nether Bow was reached, and with heads uncovered they marched to St Giles Cathedral, singing the 12th Psalm, "New Israel May Say".

The Duke of Lennox was a witness of the procession in the historic High Street, he was astonished "at the seeming popularity of the ex-monk" and "tearing his beard from anger," he became more "affrayed at the sight than he had been at anything since he had arrived in Scotland."

1608 – Alienation of Abbey Lands, &c. – A deed granted to John Durie and Janet Majoribanks, his spouse, of "the 8th partes, with xxxii parte of the ville of Muirhall, alias South quenesferrie;" [Annals of Dunf. P.265]

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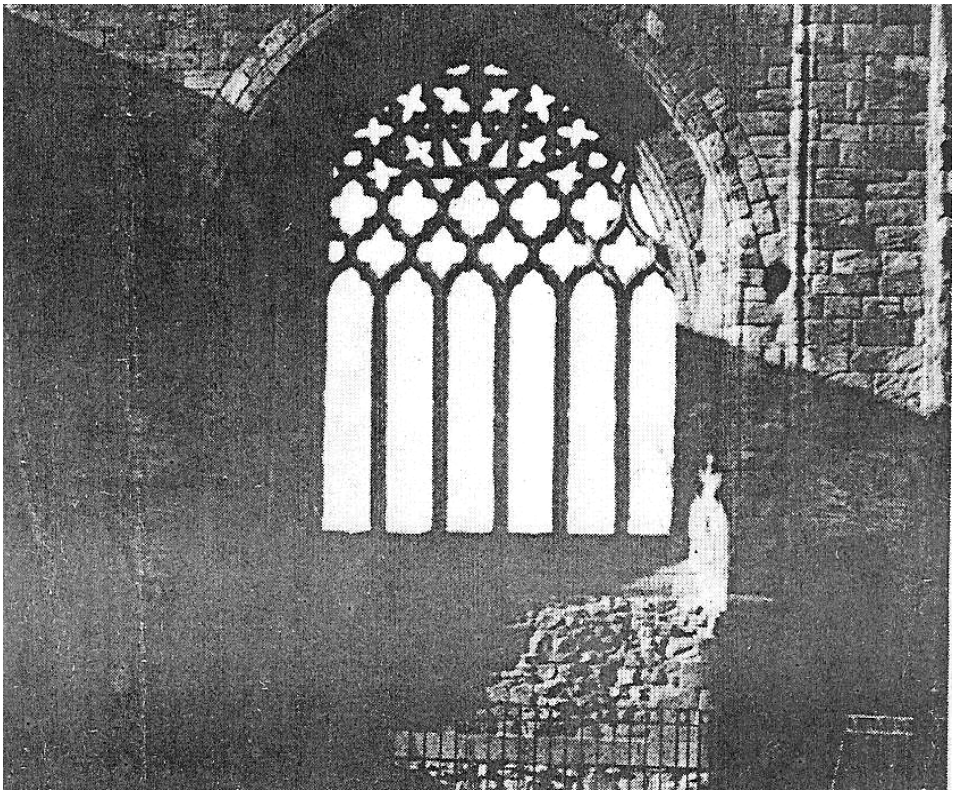
FRATER WINDOW DUNERMLINE



This is a photograph of the “Frater Window” which is situated at the west end of Dunfermline Abbey Monastery.

Note that there is a spectre of an obviously royal crowned figure on the steps situated at the right bottom corner of the window.

This phenomenon occurs only a few days in the year and lasts only a few minutes.

Obviously, this is a trick of the sun and only happens when one of the ancient shaped windows lines up with its brilliant orb and projects the window form, with some distortion, on this appropriate spot. This apparition may be of interest to some readers. I myself consider it very unusual – something which has taken place for hundreds of years and probably unnoticed, too.

I printed this negative on a hard grade of photographic paper, which gives it some impact, but the spectre can be seen quite clearly, provided the time, date and conditions are right. [Richard Grant, Dunfermline]

Sources for further reading: - Historical and Statistical Account of the Town and Parish of Dunfermline by Rev. Peter Chalmers Volume1.

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Painted by Adam West wood.
Dunfermline Carnegie Library.

PLAN OF ABBEY GROUNDS

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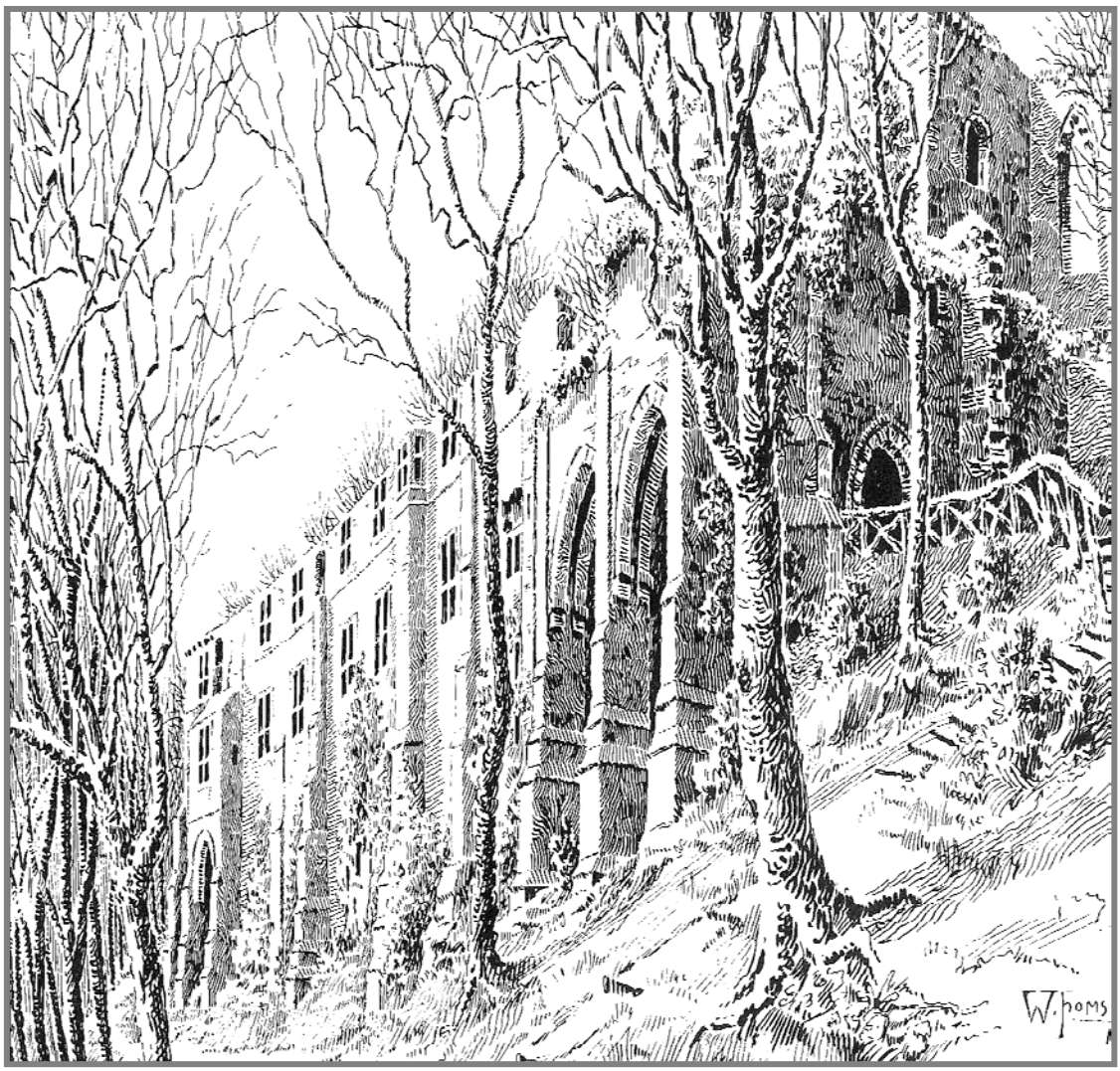
THE ROYAL PALACE - DUNFERMLINE

"Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare,
Dunfermline is excelling."



W. Banks & Son Edin 1856

Very little now remained of the palace but the west wall, built upon a steep slope, at the bottom of which was the water of Lyne or "Tower-burn" From the portions of the palace that remained, it could be seen that many alterations had from time to time taken place in its structure. The windows in particular had undergone a great change. They were originally Gothic, and of very wide dimensions, but had been altered to square or Tudor. In the suffix or ceiling of one of the upper windows thee was a large sculptured

stone bearing a representation of the Annunciation. That carving was supposed to have formed part of an altar in the Abbey, or the tympanum of an arched door or window, and to have been removed to its present position at the Reformation. When discovered in its present position it had been plastered over, as if for concealment. Charles I was born in this palace in 1600. The room generally pointed out as the place of the birth of Charles, was that of the Annunciation Stone, but he was much of opinion that it was a room in the same storey at the west, or newer, part of the building.

The kitchen of the palace was a large unroofed apartment, and had two spacious fireplaces. The iron cooking grate or range of one of these was now in Her Majesty's Office of Works, Edinburgh. A communicating passage through the pending tower, and a wheel stair, led from the monastery to the kitchen–the brethren having a right of certain supplies from the latter place.

Underneath the kitchen there was a large vaulted room, locally known as the "magazine" from the fact of its having been used during the civil wars as a store for ammunition. It had the appearance of a chapel or crypt, and from its architecture had evidently formed originally part of the monastery, and not of the palace. At the north-east corner of that vaulted room was the entrance to a dark passage; witch appeared to have been an under-ground communication between the monastery and the church. On a recent exploration it was found that the passage led in that direction, but about 90 feet from the entrance it was found to be built up. It seemed quite likely that, although at one time a thoroughfare for the brethren, it had been broken at the upper end by the formation of the public road and other changes. The passage was arched with groins or ribs at intervals, and was over 6 feet in height from the paved floor, though in places, from the accumulation of earth and other matter, it was now much less. [The Architect Sept. 14 1888 p.151-2]

Like the monastery, the palace has suffered much at the hands of the vandal. Only its southern wall remains entire, and several subsidiary but remarkable chambers at its eastern end. The Tower over St Catherine's Wynd is directly attached to the monastery on the east and the palace on the west, and forms a picturesque bond of connection between the two buildings. That the vaulted kitchen of the palace served the monastery also has been suggested, but that is scarcely probable. It would be quite inadequate to supply the collective demands of the Royal table, the stately board of the abbot,

the colony of monks, and the army of nobles, retainers, and servants, that gathered periodically within the bounds. Nor was here any necessity for this dual service, as the conventual buildings were so extensive and complete that their possession of a culinary department was as certain as was the appetite of the brotherhood.

Though several Scottish sovereigns left their mark on the palace, its architectural appearance as a whole is singularly harmonious. Broadly speaking, it reflects the sprit of the 16th century Domestic Gothic style more than the effects of the earlier ideas still traceable in certain parts and details. That the substructure is much older than the upper walls is unquestioned. The eastern portion, almost in its entirety, is apparently as old as the 14th century monastic remnants; and its interior chambers have all the charm of ancient masonry that is comparatively well preserved.

There is evidence that the third James – to whom Stirling owed its grandeur – contributed to the growth of the Royal house at Dunfermline, but his portion of the work cannot precisely be determined. The central and larger section of the palace was in all probability erected by King James V whose penchant for building brought Falkland and Linlithgow also into being, King James VI further improved the residence of which he made frequent use, extending it by erecting the Queen's House, a separate but connected building which shared the fate of the monastery and palace, whose destruction now seems wanton to criminality.

From the nature of the ground, the façade of the palace was long and low. Its elevation to the Glen measures over two hundred feet in length, and walls rising to the height of sixty feet, and showing three ranges or storeys of windowed chambers. Those in the basement of the central portion have long been built up, but that they furnished accommodation for the Royal staff cannot be doubted. Over the basement, and on the level of the higher ground to the north, was a range of public apartments Chief among these was the magnificent Hall, over ninety feet long, whose lofty windows command views of the Glen that are unrivalled in their beauty. If there be any reason in the contention that Shakespeare visited Scotland, with the players for whom according to the old records, "eicht feder beds," were prepared at Dunfermline, the great dramatist may have made a histrionic appearance with his company within the very walls of this spacious room! The upper storey contained the private apartment so the Sovereign and the western wing seem to have been exclusively

devoted to the Royal requirements. In which of all these classic chambers.

The King sat in Dunfermline toon,
Drinking the blood red wine,

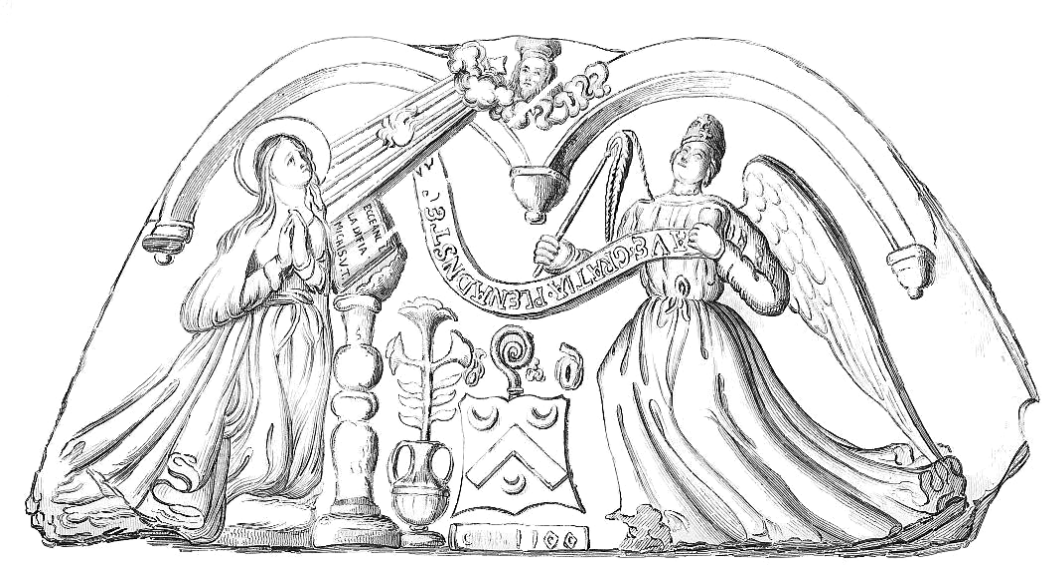
Not even tradition has left a suggestion, though the voices of the past are by no means silent within their ruinous shades.

Here is the birthplace of King Charles I they tell us, the peevish baby so tried the patience of his nurse and parents that the Scottish Solomon expressed the wish that Satan himself might take the child away!

Another room has the window marked by the quaintly sculptured Annunciation Stone, and here tradition avers the Princess Elizabeth–afterward Queen of Bohemia–was born. The carved lintel itself is not without a spice of the romantic. After doing duty for a time as part of

Abbot Dury's memorial, as is plausibly conjectured, Master-Mason Schaw removed it from the Abbey ruins to the palace, placing it in the chamber of august master to commemorate his daughter's birth.

Annunciation Stone



The relic was long lost under the plaster of later repairs, but was again brought to light early in the last century. Then arose a discussion regarding its age and purpose which was not without an aspect of quite humour. The syllable "fido" in the Dury legend–

Confido–was read as “1100” and there and then the date of the palace was incontrovertibly assured. But, as the Dury arms and motto were more clearly revealed, and eventually understood, the puzzle gradually resolved itself into the conjecture above recorded.

It should be remembered that King Robert the Bruce was occasionally resident at Dunfermline, and that his son, who afterwards became Kind David II was born here in 1323. Thus it is inferable that on the rebuilding of the monastery after its destruction by Edward King of England, the Scottish monarch also restored the palace, which for long afterwards was occupied by the hero king and his descendants, David II and Johanna, his queen; Robert III and Queen Anabella Drummond, were other 14th century residents; and the rest of Scotland’s royal Jameses, son of the last-named sovereigns, first saw the light within the ancient walls in 1394. As has been indicated, the other Jameses showed their favour for Dunfermline by renewals and extensions of the historic structure whose southern elevation remains their picturesque and appropriate memorial.

The exterior features of the great south wall can be fairly well viewed from the pathway skirting its base. Very massive yet finely proportioned, are the strengthening buttresses rising sheer from the Glen to the top of the lofty walls, their uniting arches of solid masonry giving a sturdy character to the lower and older portion of the work. The large windows of the superstructure contrast strongly with their narrow, Gothic neighbours in the basement storey, the boldly projecting oriel cresting the central buttress forming a striking and chaste ornamental detail in the masterly composition. Its full artistic effect is impossible at so near a range, and the Glen must be negotiated before its importance and beauty are revealed under the enchantment of distance. But there is interest and enlightenment both in the nearer and wider views, in the study of details as in the appreciation of masses; and the subject is worthy of all the attention thus may be awarded to it.

DUNFERMLINE PALACE – 1856

W. Banks & Son Edin 1856

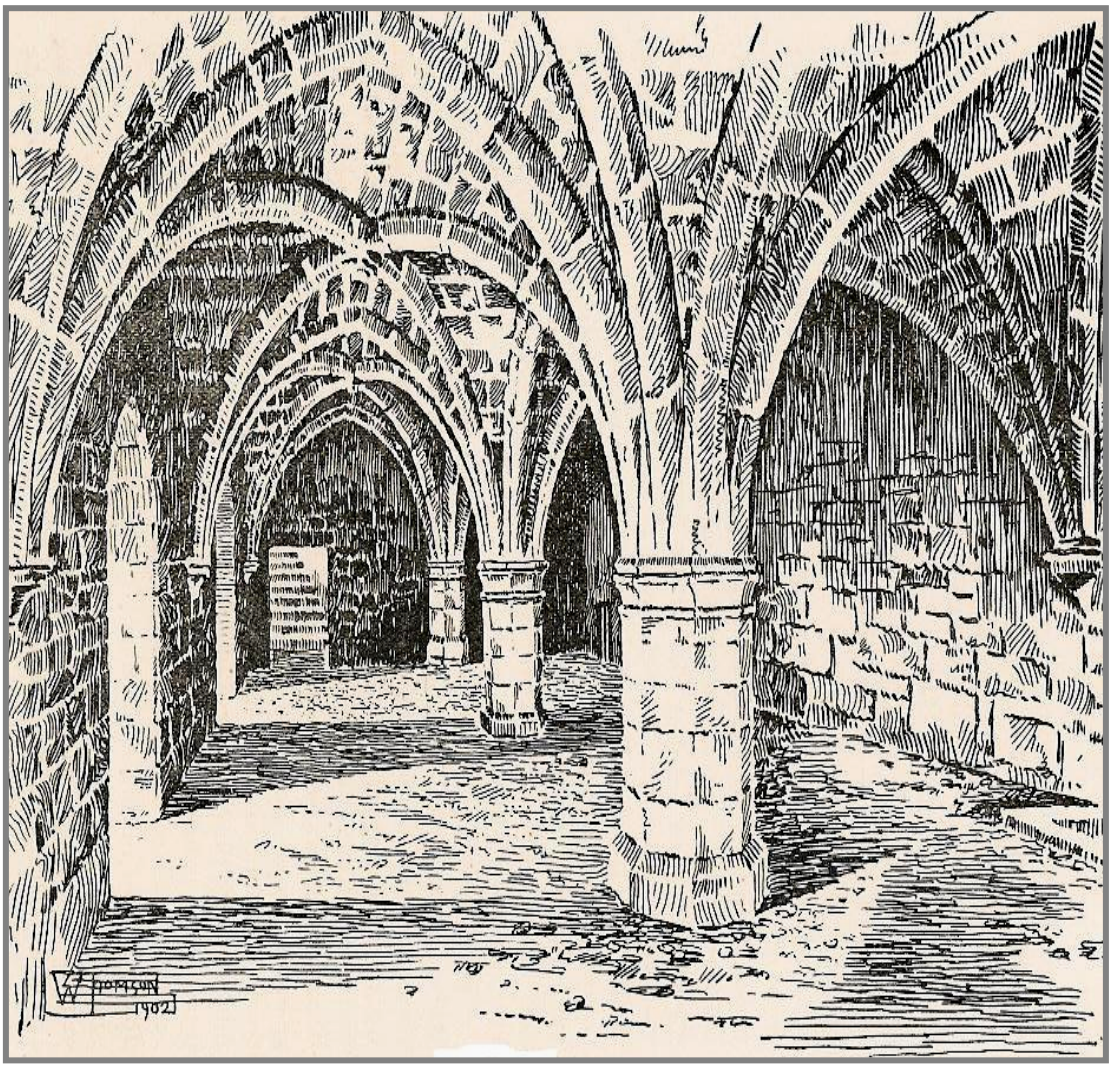
To judge from the superior style and scale of the vaulted eastern portion

Adjoining the Pend Tower, the older palace must have been a structure in every respect equal with its Jacobean rival. With greater solidity of construction, these cryptic under chambers are almost exuberant in their characteristic treatment of arched groined work, and induce favourable comparison with the lighter graces of the Stuart period grafted over their weirdly fascinating areas. In the lower crypt–a store-room very evidently is the entrance to a subterranean passage which extends for nearly 100 feet outside of the northern basement wall of the main building.

The Palace Ruins.

From the Glen, looking north West

Palace Ruins – Showing the Room below the Kitchen



The King's Wine-Cellar, Dunfermline Palace
From the `Weavers Craft` By Daniel Thomson

Its dim and arched recesses form another mystery of the past, not easy to solve in these days of greater peace and security, though we may safely conclude that it was designed for purposes of refute or concealment. The kitchen over the crypt measures 42 feet by 34 feet, and bears also the distinguished appearance of early vaulted work. It is interesting to trace its connection with the palace proper by an inner stair, and with the vault beneath by an outer stair; and the clear traces of upper arched rooms communicating with the Tower and Monastery should also be noted.

The departure of King James VI for England sealed the fate of the palace. Deserted by Royalty, it seems to have been gradually neglected by all and sundry, the existing records of any subsequent function in which it figured showing tha much had to be done to furbish it for the occasion. Charles II renounced the Pope and all his works within its walls, but the Merry Monarch must have done so with his tongue in his cheek, as was clearly proved by subsequent happenings. Nevertheless, he held his court here for a short time, and the "Dunfermline Declaration" of adherence to the Covenant remains a historic proof of Charles' residence as of his roguery. Cromwell, (his men) also, is credited with a visitation of the birthplace of the Royal Martyr; and in 1715 some of the Pretender's wild Highland supporters held high jinks within its decaying walls. In later times, the Queen's House–which was situated at the eastern end of the Palace Yard, and close to St Catherine's Wynd–was treated so cavalierly by the bucks of Dunfermline that they held cock-fights within it, its demolition being ordered by "the powers" in order to stop the indecent exhibition which, otherwise they could not prevent.

It is regrettable in the extreme that a structure so interesting and so beautiful architecturally, was so cruelly despoiled. But the strictest care will now be taken of the precious remnants of the Royal Palace, so that for many years to come they may speak to the heart in the spirit of Thomas Morrison's verses:-

Time was when Scotland's banner flung
Its fold across thy wall,
When our heroic sires here sprung
At Freedom's sacred call.

And oft here would assemble then
The gay and festive throng,
And scare the echoes of the Glen
With midnight mirth and song.

But all are gone, we whispering sigh;
The gay, the proud, the brave,
Who thronged the halls of yore, now lie
Oblivious in the grave.

The Palace Ruins were for many years regarded as a pertinent of the Pittencrieff estates, and their proprietors–to their credit be it told–put themselves to much trouble and expense in repairing and preserving

them. Latterly, their strongly-asserted claims of proprietorship were questioned, with the result that the Crown took possession of the buildings, and restored to the public, under certain conditions, acquisition of Pittencrieff by the Carnegie Trust has brought the ancient palace closer than ever under the observation of the citizen and the visitor, an advantage for which patriotic sentiment must ever be grateful. This birthplace and residence of Scotland's Monarchs is a historic monument of the deepest interest among the local antiquities of Dunfermline, with a history that every child of the city should learn and a charm that every visitor of the Glen should feel. [Royal Dunfermline by Alan Reid p. 50 -60]

PALACE RUINS DUNFERMLINE

Picture taken by Alan Calder
Looking down on the ruins of the Palace at Dunfermline.

THE END