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The castellated architecture of Aberdeenshire

Hay, Andrew Leith

Aberdeen, 1849

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Leslie.

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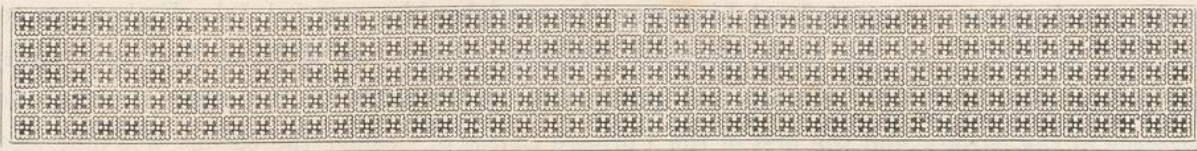
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LESLIE CASTLE.

A. I. H.



Leslie.



ESLIE Castle is situated on the north bank of the Gadie, and in the parish of Leslie, a name derived from the family of Leslie or Leslyn, who, by tradition, possessed estates in the district as early as the eleventh century. The present castle was built in 1661, and has been one of the largest and most commodious residences of its class in the county. Enclosed by a rampart and fosse, it was also, to the west, defended by a watch tower and drawbridge; over the gateway is the date 1663, and above the entrance the inscription, "Hœc Corp. Sydera Mentem."

David, the eighth in succession from Bartholomew, who came to Scotland with Margaret Queen of Malcolm Caenmore, was the first Baron of Leslie in the Garioch; he married Elizabeth Leith, daughter to the Laird of Edingarroch, an ancestor of the family of Leith Hall; by her he had no family. He subsequently went to the Holy Land, and, on his return, married, secondly, the daughter of Sir Robert Davidson, Provost of Aberdeen, who was killed at the battle of Harlaw; he had one son, Alexander, who succeeded him, and married the daughter of George Leslie of Balquhain; by her he had a son, supposed to have been poisoned by his stepmother. His second wife was Janet Mouat, daughter to Balquhollie; by this marriage he had George, who became the Laird of Leslie, and married the daughter of the Earl of Rothes; his second wife was Violet Middleton, and his third, Margaret Fraser, the daughter of Andrew Fraser of Muchals. By the first of these marriages he had Alexander, who became his heir; by his second lady he had Henry, the father of William, and of Janet, who married James Davidson, and, accompanying him to Copenhagen, died there; by his third wife, he had Thomas, who died a student at St. Andrews, and William, who married the daughter of Sir John Innes of Innes, he was the first "Gudeman of Chapelstone" Alexander, the next in succession, married Janet, daughter of John Leslie of New Leslie. All his children by this marriage died young, with the exception of one daughter, Christian, to whom he made over the estate; she married Leslie of Pitnamoon; their eldest son, John, married the daughter of Dempster of Muireisk; of this marriage, Patrick alone survived; he married, first, the daughter of Lumsden

of Clova, and, secondly, Sarah, daughter to Keith of Inverugie; their eldest son, George, married the daughter of Patrick Lord Lindores; she surviving him, married John Forbes, son to the Laird of Monymusk, by Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of William Earl of Angus. This person, from his lady's jointure, and purchasing up the debts on the estate, became the possessor of the barony, and the first of the Forbes's Lairds of Leslie; the barony was inherited by their son, William, who married Janet, sister to Lord Duffus, he re-built the Castle of Leslie, and died in the year 1670. Their son, John Forbes, succeeded to the estate, which, during his lifetime, became, by purchase, the property of the family of Leith Hall, in whose possession it has since continued. This family had previously obtained the barony of New Leslie, and John, the ninth in succession, resided there, as did his son James, until he erected the house of Leith Hall, about the year 1650.

The remains of the Castle of New Leslie have been eradicated by the progress of agricultural improvement, but its neighbouring stronghold, although in a state of ruin, exhibits, in the perfect state of its roofless walls, the substantial masonry of its construction; and from the road to Aberdeen, which passes in its immediate vicinity, presents an interesting specimen of the baronial castles of the seventeenth century.

The castle and adjacent lands form part of the Rannes estate, and are now possessed by the eighteenth proprietor, in direct succession from the Leiths of Edingarroch.

