

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM, 3RD LORD FORBES.

Born ? Succeeded, 1461-62. Died before July 5th, 1483.

WILLIAM, the 3rd Lord Forbes, was the eldest son of the 2nd Lord, and succeeded in 1461-62. The MS. history of the family describes him as

“Agnamed Grey Willie from his complexion and hair. He was a hardy and mettlesome gentleman who behaved himself so gallantly in the late fight at Brechin, and gave such uncontested proofs of his resolution and bravery, exposing himself to the greatest hazards and danger where the Battel was hottest, reinforcing those of his side and party by his personal courage and daring forwardness when they were beginning to give ground, so animating their staggering resolutions with new life and vigour, that the victory in a great measure was ascribed to his fortitude and the undauntedness of his followers, so that all spake liberally to his advantage and praise.”

The battle referred to was that at Brechin on May 18th, 1452, when the Earl of Huntly defeated the Earl of Crawford, a rebel against the king, and one Hutcheon Calder of Aswanley “took” from Lord Crawford a Silver Cup.

The family chronicle continues—

“Tis certain his (Lord Forbes) deportment and Mien did soe exceedingly endear him to the noble generall, that besides other demonstrations of a gratefull resentment to his family he made choise of him for his son-in-law, Lord Forbes being shortly after married to the Earl's daughter Dame Christian Gordon, by which honourable match the family of Forbes did first contract Allyance with the Earle of Huntley and the illustrious sirname of Gordone.”

(Here follows a long dissertation on the Gordons.)

“This William Lord Forbes both by his own merits and as being son-in-law to the great favorite Huntly, came to be in great favour with King James (II.) the remaining part of his reign which was not long. He (Lord Forbes) lived much of his tyme in the reigne of King James III. (1460-1488). He meddled with neither of the factions of the Boyds nor Kennedies (*who strove for the possession of the young King*) nor had any hand in the Association against the King (*which arose in 1482 and culminated in the King's death at Sauchieburn, 1488*).

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“ He mightily improved his private fortune by new acquisitiones, particularly the lands of Strathgirnnoch on Deeside, which some will have to be the donation of ye Earle of Huntly his father-in-law for his honourable service at Brechin, others that these lands were purchased by Mr. Richard Forbes (a natural brother of his) who was a churchman and Dean of Aberdeen, who disposed the same to his brother Lord William.”

As already seen, Richard Forbes, Dean of Aberdeen, was a natural son of the 1st Lord Forbes, and therefore *uncle* to William, the 3rd. According to the *Exchequer Rolls* of 1451, Magister Richard Forbes, Canon of Aberdeen, provided furnishings for the king (James II.). He was chamberlain of the king's lands, as well as chamberlain of Mar, and elsewhere is called comptroller, or “Camerarius ultra Spey.” On the king's behalf he received salmon from Aberdeen. He was also Archdeacon of Ross, and is recorded as having held the ward of the lands of James, 2nd Lord Forbes (his half-brother), pending the succession in 1462 of his nephew William, who may perhaps have been still a minor at his father's death.

William, Lord Forbes, appeared as proxy for Alexander, 1st Earl of Huntly, in the Parliament which met on October 9th, 1464.¹ Three years later he entered into a Bond of manrent with the heads of Clanchattan for the mutual defence and protection of their respective families against all and sundrie, both parties “keepand their alledgiance to Sovereigne Lords the King.” The Mackintoshes do actually also “keep their alledgiance to the Earle of Ross.” It is curious that the Scottish Peerage (following the brief notice of Lord Forbes' papers in the *2nd Report of the Historical MSS. Commission*) says that “both parties mention their respective overlords,” but in the actual document, of which the “double” is reproduced in the Appendix,² there is no mention of anyone to whom Lord Forbes owes allegiance save the king. The MS. *Registrum de Forbes* gives only an abbreviated copy. [27].

This question of feudal superiority was one of the frequent causes of bitter quarrels between the Lords Forbes and Huntly. It will be seen that it arose again in the reign of King James VI., after Queen Mary had granted a charter in 1563 to the effect that the lands “hitherto holden of Huntlie should henceforth be holden of the Crown.” Several Acts of Parliament were passed in connection with these feuds (see John, 8th Lord, page 132). At the date of the *last* dispute, i.e. 1599, Huntly offered to abrogate the clause which entailed the following of him to war. (See page 219.)

William, Lord Forbes, married, as has been seen, before 1468, Christian, third daughter of Alexander, 1st Earl of Huntly, and sometime after that occasion he had a charter from his father-in-law of the lands of Abergairn,³ etc. (which is probably what is referred to above).

¹ Acts of Parliament.

² Pages 46 and 47.

³ Page 48.

OLD STONE AT CASTLE FORBES.

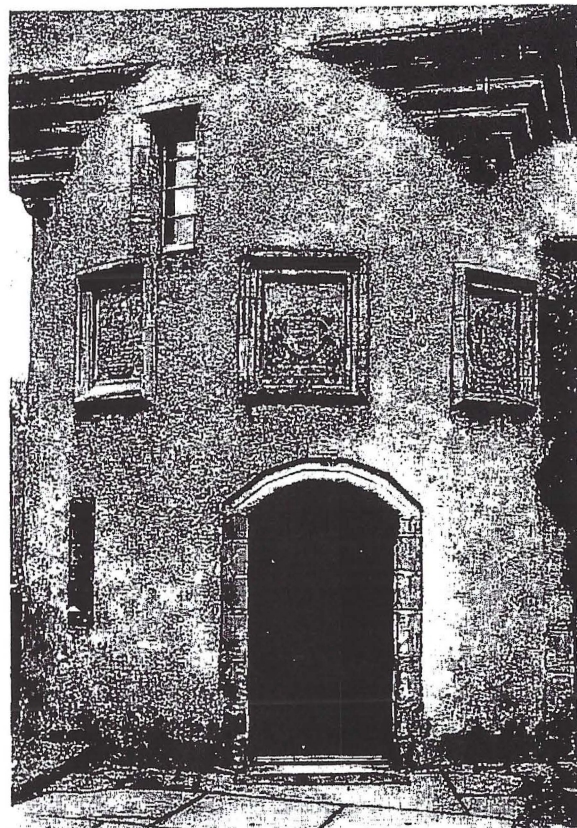


Above the Shield—"Grace me guide."

Below the Shield—"Decore decus ad ditavit.
Pax intra haec cor . . ."

(See page 285.)

OLD DOORWAY OF DRUMMINOR CASTLE.



Centre Stone—Forbes Arms, with Greyhound Supporters.
"W. M. F." (William, Master of Forbes, afterwards
7th Lord Forbes.)

Left Hand Stone—Two Shields:

Upper One—"Grace Me Gyd. W. L. F. (William,
Lord Forbes, 7th Lord), 1577."

Lower One—"My Hope is in the Lord God.
E. L. K." (Egidia Keith.)

Right Hand Stone—"I. C. M. F." (Jean Campbell. Master
of Forbes.)

(See page 42.)

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" Alex. erle of Huntly, with the consent of his son George lord Gordon (afterwards the 2nd Earl) by the direction of Alex. Skene their baillie, to William Lord Forbes of the lands of Abergardine in the barony of Aboyne of the lands of Tilliefour and Tillykerrie in Tulch, in barony of Cluny and of Suthnahunny in Mygmar."

This sasine was confirmed February 24th, 1539-40 (*under the Great Seal*)

At this date also William, Lord Forbes, gave a bond of manrent for himself and his heirs in the Lordship of Forbes to Alexander, Earl of Huntly, and George, Lord Gordon his son, similar to that made with the Clan Chattan, which is the second document of the kind between the houses of Huntly and Forbes, afterwards so long and so bitterly at variance; Huntly signed on the same day an equivalent bond, obliging himself to assist and defend William, Lord Forbes, against all enemies. " Our soverane Lord out tane."¹

The witnesses to this bond were the Bishop of Moray and Aberdeen, the Abbot of Aberbrothoc, Alex. Lord Glamis, William Lord Abernethy, Walter Lindsay, William Knoll, Walter Stewart of Strathoun, knight, Malcolm Fleming and Sir James Ogilvy, knight.

James, 2nd Lord Forbes, had also given a personal bond of service (as seen on page 39). The Forbeses had in early days held land on some kind of feudal tenure from the Crown and from the Earls of Buchan and Mar, and were from now onwards to do so from the Earls of Huntly. No. (31) in the *Registrum* is a curious letter from the king to Lord Forbes, ordering him to deliver to Lord Erroll (with whom, apparently, Forbes was not on good terms) the roll of persons to be indited to the next Justice Court at Aberdeen.

" 9th Mai 1473 from King James III ' Welebelovit cousing—we grete you wele, and for sae mekil yar is strayingenes betwix yow and our cousing William Erle of Erroll, Our will is and we charge yow straitlie and commandis yat ye deliver ye portewf [*sic*] dittay to our said Cousing or to ye persoune yat he sends to yow, of sa many personis yat pertains to him yat he may mak yame to be arrestit to compear in our next Justice Are to be haldin in our burgh of Aberdene. And under ye lawis of our Realme as efferis yfor we have written to him to resseave ye samen fra yow And yis ye do under ye pane and charge yat efter may folow. Gevin under our Signet at Edinburgh ye IX day of Maii and of our regne ye XIII yeir,' and addressed ' Dilecto consanguineo nostro Willelmo Domino forbes '—*ex deliberatione dominorum consilii.*"

There is in Lord Forbes' charter chest a copy, in a modern hand, of a charter of confirmation, August 19th, 1474, by King James III. of a charter of William, Lord Forbes, granted to

" dilecto clerico nostro Magistro Ricardo Forbes, decano Abredonensi "

¹ The bond signed by William Lord Forbes is in the charter room at Gordon Castle. That signed by Huntly, July 8th, 1468, is at Castle Forbes, the former will be found in the Appendix (p. 48).

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of an annual rent of £10 out of the lands of Futhes Begg and Futhes Mor (Fiddes). Below which is the following note—

“ This shows that William Lord Forbes was a Lord of Parliament in King James III's time,”

as having the right to grant a charter.

“ In 1475 there was ‘ a declaration by Patrick of forbes, brother german of William lord forbes that he has sold to the said Lord, for a hundred marks, the ward of the lands of Cromdayll, come in the King's hands by the decease of Isoibeill of Dollayss and given by the King to the said Patrick.

Subscribed

Pattercius forbes

manu ppa.’ (Patrick of Corse.) (33.)

“ Witnesses Henry forbes of Kynellor, Jhon of forbes of Burchis (Brux), John of forbes of Tulygenye, Duncan of forbes of Ardgathyn—Davy of forbes of Eychtry.”

On July 9th, 1477, William, Lord Forbes, had a confirmation by King James III. of the charter of the barony of Forbes granted to Sir Alex. Forbes, afterwards 1st Lord Forbes, by James I.

This was held *direct* from the king, without any overlord.

The 3rd Lord died between July 9th, 1477, and July 5th, 1483. By his wife, Christian Gordon, he had three sons who successively held the title—

Alexander, the 4th, o.s.p.

Arthur, the 5th, o.s.p.

John, the 6th Lord.

“ (It is surmised that he had another son, from whom was descended General Arthur Forbes, born in Finland, a distinguished soldier under Gustavus Adolphus, created a baron in 1642—Governor of Pomerania, and Senator of Sweden. General Arthur is said to have himself claimed descent from the 3rd Lord Forbes and his wife of the house of Huntly.)” (See also p. 469.)

There was one daughter, Christian, who married, as his second wife, William, 1st Lord Ruthven, and had issue.

APPENDIX FOR WILLIAM, 3RD LORD FORBES.

BOND OF MANRENT, 1467.

P. 144. “ *A Copy (on paper—17th Cent. hand) of the bond of manrent betwixt the Lord forbes and the Clanchattain. (MS. Castle Forbes.) An abbreviated copy is in Registrum (27).*”

“ This Indenture made at forbes the nynt day of August one thousand four hundred and sixty seven yeir, betwixt ane honourable Lord, William Lo. forbes

Sir Alex. Forbes of Pitsligo Alex. Forbes of Tolquhon Arthur of Forbes and John of Forbes of Bruachouse (Brux) on the one part And honourable men Duncan McIntosh Chief & Captain of Clanchattan, Hutcheon Ross, barone of Kilravock Lachlan McIntosh and Allan McIntosh, brothers to the sd Duncan, on the tother part, purports and bears witness that its fully appoynted and accorded betwixt the sds parties in Maner and fform as after follows. That is to say the fford William Lord Forbes and his partie before written, binds and inherides them baith for themselves and all and sundry their kin, men, partie and inheridors that weel inheld be them, to keep heartilie friendship and kinrente, love and tenderness and take open upright part in all and sundrie their causes and quarrels with the foresd Duncan, Hutcheon, Lachlan & Allan and till all their kinsmen, partie and if any manner of men scapes or would scape for their deeds, dishensions, Banishing or undoing, the sd William Lord Forbes and his partie shall defend them at all their goodly powers both be might and slight, and doe for them, their own persons, men, kins and inheridors, (keipand his alledgiance and service to our Sovereign Lord the King) And this sd Sir Alex. and Alexr. of Forbeses, John & Arthur of Forbeses keipand their alledgiance to there sd Lords, And in Lyke manner the foresd Duncan and his partie before written binds and obliges them baith for their self and ffor all and sundrie their men, kin, partes and inheridors that inherits or will inherit to them to keep heartilie Friendship, kinrent, love and tenderness and take open upright partie in their cause and quarrel to the said William Lord Forbes and his partie above written etc.

And if any manner of men scapes or would scape for the deeds disension, banishing ore undoing the sd Duncan, Hutcheon, Lachlan & Allan and all their kinsmen etc. shall defend them at all tymes and occasions as for theor owen persons, keepand their alledgiance to Sovereign Lord the King and the sd Duncan etc. keepand theirs to the Earle of Ross. Ilk ane of the sd pairties are bound and obliged to the Tother that should never one of them nare of these men for any manner of meed or rewarde for to come na, or to gang, to make herschipe slaughter nae distrubance one to the Tother in any tyme to come, and that all and sundry their word and poyntment shall be weill and Loill keepit without fraud and guyle, to the longest liver of them and this band perpetuallie to enduir for ever marre and to the survivors of this either of the pairties has made till the tother their great Bodilly Aithes, The Holly Evangell touchit, and whosoever shall break one the Conditions shall be holden unfamous and renounces the faith of Christ and never be hold ne heard in profe nor witness Nae ly in Kirk, na Christen bounds—

“ In witness whereof the fford pairties to these mean Powers interchangeable has affixed their sealls for the longest liver of the Tother pairties.

“ This is a just Double of the p̄rill lying in my Lord Forbes custodie.”

(being written on parchment) ¹

there being no other Double extant.

(There are two copies on paper, one at Castle Forbes and another at Kilravock.)

¹ The charter has two Mackintosh seals intact.

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SASINE OF ABERGARDINE, HUNTLY TO HIS SON-IN-LAW (FILIO IN LEGE).

[30] "8 July 1468. Preceptum Sasinæ per Alexandrum Comitem de Huntlie cum consensu et assensu filii sui et apparentis heredis, Georgii domini de Gordoun (directum Alexandro Skene de eodem, Ballivo suo in hac parte) ad infeoffandum dilectum suum Willelmum dominum de forbes filium suum in lege, in terris de Abergardine jacentibus in baronia de Obine vice comitatu de Aberden, terris de tulyfour, et tulykere jacentibus in dominio de Tulch et baronia de Cluny, terris de Suthnahunne jacentibus in baronia de Mygmar infra vice-comitatem predictum, cum clausula de reali warantizatione Earundem per sasinam terrarum de Mains de Cluny etc."

(The two seals are still attached, but somewhat mutilated.)

"WILLIAM LORD FORBES BOND OF MANRENT TO ALEXANDER EARL OF HUNTLY.
1468—From Gordon Castle.¹

"Be it kend till all men by this present lettres, me Willeame lord Forbas, to be cummyn, and be this my present lettres, becummis man of speciale fealle, retenu and service til ane hie and mightie lord, Alexander erle of Huntlie and lord of Badzenach, to serve him lely and treuly for all the dais of my lif, baith in pece and in war, befor and againnis all thaim that lyve or dye, may myne allegence to my souveraine lord alanerly outtane and except, etc: in witnes of the quhillkis, and for the mar certificatioune harof, I have made my sele be appensit to this lettres at Aberdene, the VIII day of the moneth of Julii, the yere of God ane thousand four hundreth sexti and aucht yeres befor this witnes, reverendis fadiris in Criste, Thomas and David, be the grace of God bischopis of Aberdeen and of Murrey, Malcolm abbot of Arbroth, Alexander lord Glammis, Willeame lord Abernethy, Walter Lindsay, Sir Walter of Strathown knight, Sir Willeame Knollis, preceptor of Torfiching, and Malcome Flemyng, with mony diverss and sindry utheris."

And a similar one to Huntly's son, George Lord Gordon, afterwards the 4th Earl.

Also a further most important document, called a Reversion, in the same year.

REVERSION.

"8 Julie 1468.

"Be it made Kende till all men, me William Lord Forbes to be bundyn be the faythe of my bodie till ane nobile and mighty lordis Alexander erle of Huntlie and Lord Badzenach and his sone George Lord Gordone, to quhome I ame mane of feale and special retinu—for the quhilk manrent and service my saide Lorde of Huntlie hes giffine me the landis of Abirgardin liande in the Barony of Obyne, the landis of Tulyfour, and Tulykere wyth thar pertinentis liande in the

¹ The corresponding bond, of the same date, Huntly to Forbes, now at Castle Forbes, is very much mutilated, by damp and mice, and the seal has gone.

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lordship of Tulch, and the landis of Suthnahunne liande in the barony of Mygmar within the shirefdome of Abirdene to me and all myne ayris quhatsumever, that giff it sall happinne me to decess, as Gode forbide, without ayris gottine of my body betwix me and Christiane of Gordoun my spous, dochter to my saide Lord of Huntlie and sister to my said Lord of Gordoun, throw the quhilkis the succession of my heritage fall in the handis of ony otheris of my kyne male or famell that quhat sumever that be, that sall succede to me to my heritage of the landis of the lordship of Forbes the ayris succedande to me in lykways sall be men of special service manrent and retenu, as I am to my forsaide Lordis, In witness of the quhilk thing I have made my sele be apensit to this letteres at Abirdene the VIII day of the moneth of Julie the yere of God ane thousand four hundrethe sexti and aucht yeres before witnesses "

DECREE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE BROTHER OF THE 3RD LORD.

" *Decreit aganis Adame Elmisle 13th Feb. 1492.*

(*from Acta Dominorum Auditorum, p. 164.*)

"The Lordis Auditouris decrettis and deliveris that Adame Elmisle sall decist and cess fra the occupatione and manurin of the tak and making of *Glentoun* liand in the barony of Kege and Monymusk within the schirefdome of Abirdene to be brukit and manurit *be Duncane Forbes the brother of unquhile Williame lord Forbes* after the forme of the lettre of tak, maid to him tharapone be the Archbisshop of Sanctandrois for the termes of five yeris, under his sele and subscriptione manuale schewin and produāt befor the Lordis And ordinis our Sovereine Lordis lettrez be direct herapon to devoid and red the said landis/ and also decrettis and deliveris that the said Adam sall content and pay to him the profittis and dewities of the said landis insafar as he may sufficiently preif that the said Adame has intromettit witt and taken up sen the tyme of the said *Duncanis* Entra to the said tak . . ."