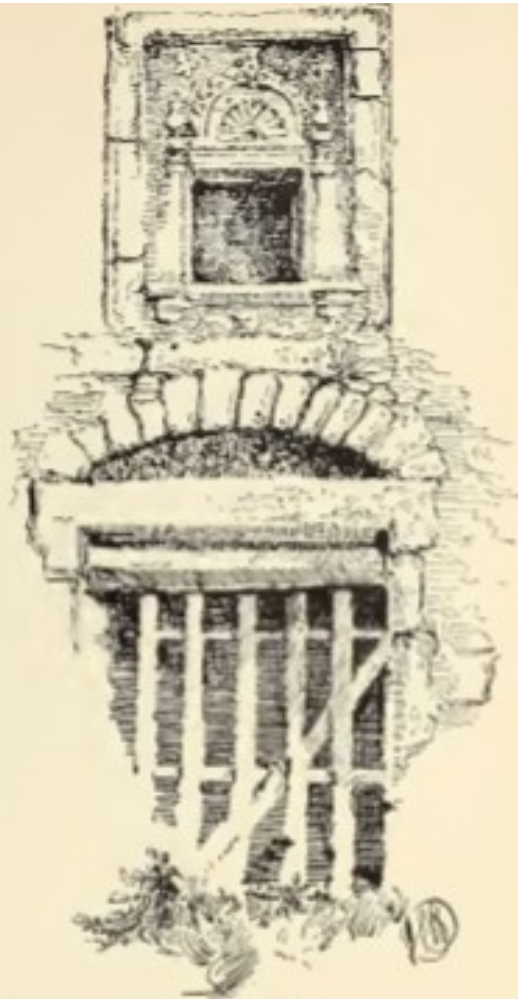


## CHAPTER XVIII.

### Part I.

## Torwood Castle.

**S**ITUATED on the highest of several wooded eminences on the south side of the highway leading from Larbert to Stirling, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant from the former town, and quite overlooking what was formerly the Royal Forest of Torwood, which is alleged to be a relic of the more ancient and extensive Caledonian forest, is a roofless mansion house of considerable size and pretensions. It is termed a castle, but it is destitute of the characteristics applicable to a place of defence, and is in no sense a stronghold. The ground plan is the reversed letter  $\Gamma$ . The main buildings have been three storeys in height, and consisted of three plain crow-stepped gabled houses of unequal height, and a square turret stair. Two high walls (the westmost formed the back wall of some outhouses) connected and formed with the buildings an oblong square, having an internal court of 120 feet on the east and west, and 80 feet on the north and south sides. The buildings occupied 80 feet on the south and 48 feet on the west sides of this square. The mansion is entered from the court by a wide doorway inserted in the east wall of



*Torwood Doorway.*

the north wing, the highest of the buildings, and *not* in the turret itself — an unusual arrangement.

At the north-east and furthest corner of the court walls from the main buildings, are the foundations and part of the walls, with a subterranean, vaulted chamber, of what appears to be a guard room for the court entrance, situated just at that spot. It is about 15 feet by 12 feet. On the north wing a wide moulding, or string course, about 8 feet from the ground, encircles it, and is continued round the turret, accommodating itself to an ornamental niche over the main doorway, in which the owner's crest was placed, but is now empty.

In the outside south wall of what has evidently been the great hall are five small windows in the basement, and three large and three slightly smaller windows in the hall storey, all formerly secured by iron bars. The eastmost of the larger windows would seem to have been used as an outside door, a most improbable original arrangement, and there is no evidence of a communicating stair. (Sketch, page 173).

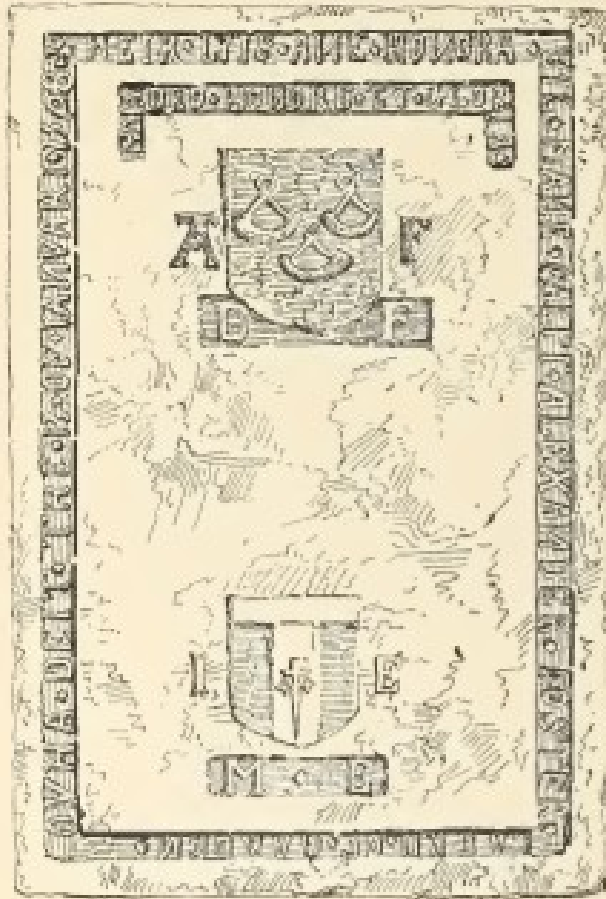
An earlier building, called in the charters, "the Forester's house," is stated to be represented by the vaulted building on the north of the court entrance, and this is probably the case, as that building, even in its ruined state, bears marks of a superior architecture, having the roof vaulting groined. The very earliest charter, so far back as 1450, shews that the office and its duties required a personal attention and residence, and the present building is certainly about 100 years later. No name, initials, date, or crest, appear on its walls to verify its ownership, although it is stated to be similar in design to Dunipace ancient mansion, and presumably of the same period.

A family named Bailie are alleged to be the first holders of the forester's office, but from Malcolm Forrester's possession in 1450.

downwards in a direct unbroken line, it remained and was hereditary in that family, whose surname most probably originated from their office. David succeeds his father Malcolm in 1476, and on 26th November, 1488, James IV. confirms Duncan Forestare of Gunnershaw as heir of Hendry (David), and again, on 26th November, 1497, he confirms Sir Walter Forestare as heir to Duncan. On 9th September, 1528, Sir Walter is succeeded by David, son of David Forestare of Garden, and on 29th July, 1567, James VI. confirms the office and lands to Alexander Forrester of Garden in liferent, and to James, his son, in fee, including the house of the forester, and the lands and pertinents "of old pertaining to said office, of which the said Alexander and his predecessors have had possession beyond the memory of man:" it includes also the house and lands of Forester's hill, with right to fallen wood, bark, birch, and right of pasturage for 24 animals, 3 horses, and 6 tilling beasts, with all powers belonging to the office: "as also of *building a mansion of stone and lime*, with policies and plantations corresponding thereto." No doubt the present mansion was erected, in implement of the above obligation, by Alexander, and the general appearance and style of the masonry is in harmony with this date.

Alexander Forrester was Provost of Stirling at this period, and had his town lodging on the north side of what was formerly the *Hie* or *Mercategait*. His ancestors had a close connection with Stirling, and the members of his family sat in the High Church, and at their death were interred in the old chapel, called from this fact the "Garden aisle," (on the west window lintel of which are the initials D.F.), where their tombstones, with their arms and names, dating back to the time of Provost Alexander, may be seen. (Sketches, pages 170 and 174). The shields of that tablet on page 170 contain respectively the arms

of Forrester and Erskine, and initials A.F. and L.E.—those of Provost Sir Alexander Forrester and Jeanie Erskine, his wife. The other initials D.F. and M.E., apparently added later, being cut into the stone, seem those of their son Duncan and his wife.



the duties of the forester were considerably relaxed, the trees cut down and the forest laid waste, while his Majesty's deer were rapidly being exterminated. It culminated, in 1632, when Sir James Forrester's absence was so continued that the neglected condition of the Royal

Latin motto, *Soli deo honore et gloria*, the margin is surrounded by the following inscription, "Heir lvis ane honorabil mane calit Alexander Foster, Laerd of Garden, quha deit the 13 of Januar, 1598." The tombstone on page 174 contains also two shields, one with the husband's arms alone, and the other with his impaled with those of his wife's, evidently a member of the Forrester family, the date and initials, 1584, and A.D. and E.M.

The situation of both the ancient and more modern house have been admirably chosen for commanding the whole forest, on which it looks down. After the departure of the Court to England, in 1603, the

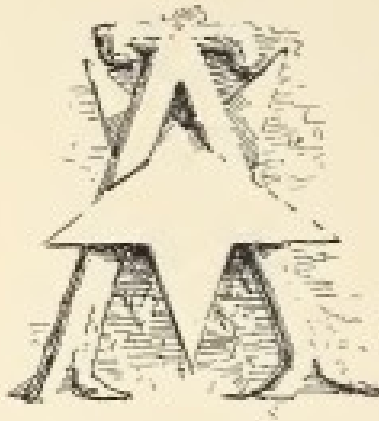
Forest was brought to the notice of King Charles I. He issued letters, dated 15th March, 1632, to Margaret and Mary Forrester, daughters of Sir James, then residing in the mansion, granting them special commission to pursue, "according to the law of our kingdom," the delinquents slaying the deer and cutting the trees, the Lord Advocate to concur for their better assistance, and all fines and "amer-ciements" taken from the delinquents for the time byegone were awarded to them for their own use.

The troubles of the martyred king with his Parliament and the general unsettled state of Scotland, combined to the neglect of protection of the deer and the forest, as of minor consideration in these trying times; and little more is subsequently heard of Torwood Royal Forest. None of the ancient trees now survive, but a strain of the King's deer exists, and is now protected in the adjoining woods of Carbrook. Thomas Dundas of Fingask, who had acquired Quarrel, purchased Torwood estate in 1751 from the heirs of Lord Forrester, and his successor, Mr. Dundas of Carronhall, recently sold it to the late Mr. Bolton of Carbrook.

In the Jesuit priest (Blackhal's) remarks of his journey from Edinburgh to pass the Forth at Stirling Bridge, in 1643, he refers to finding an ale house at end of Torwood, and, in passing Torwood, "which now hath nothing but some scattered oackes, dying for antiquity, which conserve the name and memory of that sometymes so famous a Wood, especially in the history of Wallace."

## Part 2.

### Forrester of Garden's Town Ludging.

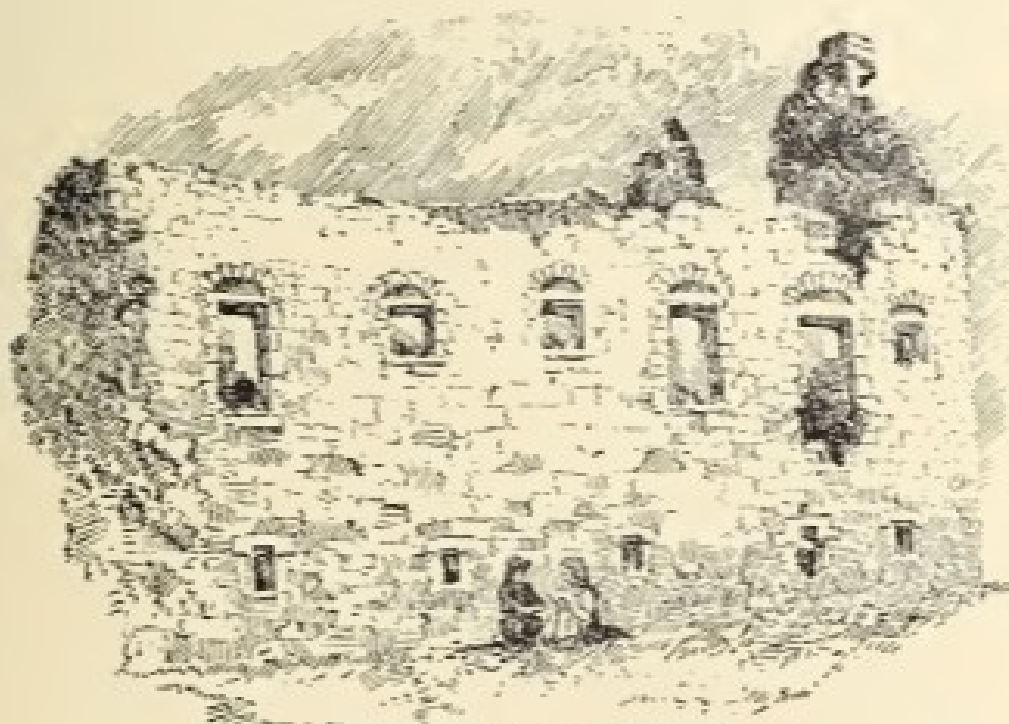


**N** Instrument of Sasine, recorded 20th May, 1658, in favour of Thomas Bauchop describes this ludging as "that great tenement of land or building, with the close, yard, and pertinents of old belonging to the deceased Sir James Forrester of Garden, lying on the north side of the High Street of Stirling, betwixt the land of the deceased James Forrester of Logie, on the east, the land of the deceased James Robertson, merchant, on the west, and the High Street on the south," etc. The Corporation purchased the property, described as in ruins in 1718, and on its site built the large tenement, with the pend, in Broad Street, at a cost of £1,465 Scots. It is named in the Town Records the "Town's New House," and was intended for an hotel.

In 1498 the ancient house belonged to Sir Duncan Forrester of Garden, Gunnershaw, and Skipynch, who was Master of the Royal Household, and also held the office of Customar and Collector of the King's rents. Sir Duncan was a favourite of James IV., who stood sponsor or "*hufe* to Duncan Forestair's sones, bairne, giving a gratuity of £9 to be put in the 'Tapir.'" On 12th April, 1518, Sir Duncan, "of devotion," constituted an annual rent of 13s. "over 2½ riggs of land near the dovecot of John Bully, next the High Street (evidently

behind his ludging), to Sir James Aikman, chaplain of the Holy Cross, for prayers for the souls of Sir Duncan, Margaret Forsyth and Margaret Bothwell, his wives. On 5th October, 1525, the Provost and Town Council convene a meeting "in the lugene of Sir Duncan Forestair of Garden, knycht, to avis on the gift of the Altar of Sanct Katerin, fundit and situat within their parocht kirk, betwixt ane and twa houris efter noune."

The old town mansion, thus demolished, was probably of the same type to be in harmony with the adjoining ludging of his kinsman, Forester of Logie.



*Banqueting Hall, Torwood.*



*Tombstone in Garden Obial,  
Stirling.*

### Part 3.

## The Old Tower or Fortalice of Garden.

**I**S alleged by tradition to have been situated on a tree covered mound in a marsh, formerly a shallow lakelet, about 400 or 500 yards west of the present mansion. The island, for such it seems formerly to have been, is about 210 feet by 120 feet, and its highest portion—about 10 feet above the water at its lowest level—is about 60 feet by 52 feet, with a causeway on the north by way of access to the mainland. On this the castle is conjectured to have stood, but not even a stone of a building kind is visible.

Although utilized in building the present mansion, some vestige of the site of the tower would have been expected, and the suggestion is raised that the marshy ground absorbed what stones remained. Hence the castle must have required a wooden pileing for its foundation, which may yet be verified by trenching the mound. The present mansion, whose walls in the older parts are  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick, may date back to the middle of the seventeenth century, and was probably built by the Senator, Sir Archibald Stirling. It was, Mr. Stirling informed me, greatly altered and added to by his father in 1827.



A few yards to the north of the mound is a knoll bearing the title of Gallowshill. This is the old Scots name for an elevated station for viewing purposes, but tradition assigns the gallows to a spot on it, presently represented by a large stone.

The earliest reference to Garden is in a charter of James IV., dated 28th November, 1497, and signed at Stirling, to Walter Forestare, son and apparent heir of "our faithful friend Duncan Forestare de Skipynch," of, *inter alia*, the lands of Garden, "with the Tower, Fortalice, and Mill thereof;" and on 16th May, 1528, the King, in addition to confirming Walter's investiture, erects these, with goose croft and clay croft of Stirling, into a free Barony of "Forestare Garden"—his father, Sir Duncan, who was then alive, reserving his liferent. At the same time the son was infeft in Torwood, etc.

One of Sir Duncan's daughters married Sir Alexander Forrester, and held the lands of Blackburn in Linlithgowshire, whose descendant is Lord Forrester of Corstorphine, etc.

Walter, some short time prior to 9th September, 1528, was succeeded by his son David, but his possession was brief, as on that date his son, also a Sir David, is settled therein, and in Torwood and the office of Royal forester. On 29th July, 1567, he was succeeded by his son, Provost Sir Alexander, whose tombstone (page 170) relates that he died on 13th January, 1598. He had at least two sons, James and Duncan. Sir James, the eldest, succeeded him, and on 26th October, 1603, also to his mother, Jeanie Erskine, in her lands of Ardmore in Menteith. On 5th April, 1608, Sir James makes up and records his title as heir to his great grandfather's father, Walter of Garden, in the lands of Cambusharron and patronage of the Chapel. His younger brother Duncan, of date 26th March, 1602, similarly made up and

recorded a title as heir of his father's great-grandfather's grandfather, Robert Forrester of Boquhane, to other lands; and it is interesting as including a barn and garden (*horreo et horto*) "on the east part of the stone wall near the Port of Stirling." Sir James seems to have shortly thereafter deserted Garden old Castle, probably as becoming uninhabitable, for Torwood, and made that mansion his residence, as he is designed, in August, 1622, as of that place.

Sir Archibald Stirling, a branch of the Keir family and a Senator of the College of Justice, was proprietor of Garden prior to 1667, and the present mansion may then have been built and occupied by him. On 15th August of that year, he designs himself as now of Keir, he having succeeded shortly before to Keir estates as heir of Sir George Stirling. On 31st July, 1668, Sir John Stirling of Keir succeeds to Garden as heir male of provision to Sir Archibald, and the estate remains in the possession of his descendants—Mr. Stirling of Garden being the present proprietor.



