

V.—2. HUGH DOUGLAS, LORD OF DOUGLAS,

BROTHER OF THE GOOD SIR JAMES.

1333—1342.

THE retired life led by Hugh, Lord of Douglas, and his obscurity in history as compared with the brilliant careers and stirring lives of his two brothers, Sir James and Sir Archibald, have led to the belief that he laboured under some mental or bodily infirmity. Godscroft, who is usually voluble in praise of his heroes, only says regarding this member of the family, that nothing is found of his actions "worthie of memorie. . . . He was neyther proper for employments, nor actually alsoe medled he himself with publicke affaires or matters of State, either in peace or warre."¹ But there is evidence to show that this character was undeserved, and that the statement of Godscroft was made in ignorance of the real position of Hugh Douglas, who lived a life of peace, and took no active part in public affairs, not from incapacity, either bodily or mental, but because, as a Churchman, he was debarred from those military pursuits in which his brothers excelled.

Hugh, Lord of Douglas, was the elder of two sons of Sir William Douglas "Le Hardi," by his second wife, Eleanor Ferrers, and was born in England

¹ MS. History at Hamilton Palace. Founding on a surmise by Godscroft as to the "dulnesse of mind" of Hugh Douglas, William, first Marquis of Douglas, inserted in the margin of the ms. the epithet, "The Dull

Douglas." The Marquis was misled by Godscroft's statement, and both were ignorant of the real position of Hugh Douglas, whose memory is only now vindicated from the imputation of imbecility.

in the year 1294. This appears from a return by the Sheriff of Essex and Hertford shortly after April 1296, who was employed to value the manors of Stebbing and others in these counties belonging to Sir William Douglas, and to confiscate them to the English king. Besides the goods seized, the Sheriff made a more interesting capture, which he describes as a son of William Douglas of Scotland, named Hugh, nearly two years old. This boy had been left in the custody of John le Parker at Stebbing, and as he had been born in England, the Sheriff arrested or detained him in safe keeping until he should receive further instructions.¹

For a period of many years from this point nothing has been discovered regarding the life of Hugh Douglas. How long he was detained in England does not appear, but the next reference to him shows that he had been educated for the Church, had embraced that calling, and was a Canon of the Cathedral Church of Glasgow. The first evidence of his acting in that capacity was an important meeting of the chapter of the diocese of Glasgow, held on 16th May 1325, when he would be about thirty-one years of age. The ritual and constitution of the Cathedral of Sarum (or Salisbury) had been adopted as the constitution of the Cathedral of Glasgow so early as the year 1258, with the saving clause, "unless it shall be found injurious" to the Canons. The disturbed state of Scotland during the wars of independence, and for many years after Bannockburn, had doubtless affected the Church, and prevented full adherence to the constitution. In 1322, however, a peace was concluded with England which lasted for a few years, and gave repose to both countries for some time. This interval of rest was chosen by the Canons of Glasgow to renew their obligation to the statutes of the Church of Salisbury, which, they say, "have been granted and observed in our Church of Glasgow from a time of which no memory exists." On this occasion no

¹ Sheriff's Accounts, Public Record Office, London. Cf. Stevenson's *Historical Documents*, vol. ii. pp. 43, 44.

reservation was made as to acceptance, but the Canons bound themselves to keep the statutes inviolable. Hugh of Douglas was not personally present at this important meeting, but a brother Canon, Richard, called Small, afterwards Dean of Glasgow, acted as his procurator.¹

What prebend Hugh of Douglas held at this time as a Canon of the Church of Glasgow, is not apparent. At a later date he held the rectory or prebend of Old Roxburgh, which was one of those that gave its occupant a right to a stall in the church and a seat in the chapter. If Old Roxburgh, or some other prebend of Glasgow, was held by Hugh Douglas at this time, we may think of him as quietly fulfilling his duties of parish priest, with an occasional visit to Glasgow as his post in the cathedral required. Such at least might be his lot during the reign of King Robert Bruce and the lives of his brother Sir James, and the Regent Randolph. But it is probable that this peaceful career was interrupted by the turbulent times which followed the deaths of these three great leaders, and the disasters which befell Scotland at the battles of Dupplin and Halidon Hill. Hugh Douglas survived both his brothers and also his nephew, William Douglas, the son of Sir James, who, as related in the previous memoir, was slain at Halidon. As Hugh thus became heir to the Douglas estates, a slight sketch of their fortunes during the next few years may here be given.

The reverses sustained by the Scottish arms left a large portion of the south of Scotland at the mercy of the English, and of Edward Baliol, the nominal king of Scotland. Immediately after the battle of Halidon in 1333, Baliol, having assumed the crown of Scotland, made over to the English king the forests of Jedburgh, Selkirk, and Ettrick, with the counties of Roxburgh, Peebles, Dumfries, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, and Haddington, to remain for ever as appanages of the English crown.² In these districts lay most of the lands which Sir James Douglas had received from his grateful sovereign in recogni-

¹ *Registrum Glasguense*, vol. i. pp. 234, 235.

² *Rymer's Fœdera*, vol. ii. pp. 888-890.

tion of his patriotism and valour. Nor did Douglasdale escape. Lord Clifford, grandson of Sir Robert Clifford who held the Douglas lands in the reign of King Edward the First, having received and sheltered Baliol when chased from Scotland by Sir Archibald Douglas and others in the winter of 1332, obtained the lands in grant again from the fugitive monarch, "if God should give him prosperous times, and restore him to his kingdom."¹ There is no evidence, however, that this grant was ever made good by possession. Four years later, when, in the end of 1336, Edward the Third of England lay at Bothwell to receive the inhabitants of the western counties to his peace, the Douglas retainers were still faithful to their allegiance. On this account, Lord Stafford, in passing through Douglasdale with reinforcements for the English army, laid the valley waste, and carried off a large spoil. Sir William Douglas, afterwards known as the Knight of Liddesdale, was lurking in the neighbourhood, pursuing the mode of warfare so successfully employed by the Good Sir James, and wrought considerable damage to the English.² The destruction of their homes, however, did not shake the loyalty of the Douglas men, and they only escaped another similar visitation at the hands of Sir Anthony Lucy in the autumn of the following year by heavy rains and floods, which compelled him to desist from further advance after a most destructive raid made by him throughout the district of Galloway.³

The lands, castle, and forest of Jedburgh, with the forests of Ettrick and Selkirk, were placed in the hands of English keepers, while the lands in neighbouring counties were similarly dealt with.⁴ Buittle, in Galloway, was at first seized by Edward himself, but afterwards restored to Baliol as his ancestral possession.⁵ The castle, town, and forest of Jedburgh were ultimately bestowed upon Henry Percy by Edward in exchange for Annan-

¹ *Chronicon de Lanercost*, p. 271.

² *Ibid.* pp. 287, 288.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 291, 292.

⁴ *Rymer's Foedera*, vol. ii. p. 889, 890.

⁵ *Ibid.*

dale and the castle of Lochmaben, which Percy had received in grant from Baliol.¹ Gifts, however, were not equivalent to possession, and it was easier to obtain the former than to secure the latter. Sir William Douglas and others, says Froissart, secreted themselves for seven years in this very forest of Jedburgh, making it, as well in winter as in summer, their headquarters, whence they sallied forth to "war against all the towns and fortresses wherein King Edward had placed any garrison, in which many perilous and gallant adventures befell them, and from which they had acquired much honour and renown."² The possession was therefore of comparatively little value to the English, as the patriotic Scots steadfastly refused to recognize a change of ownership.

During this period of confusion the English king bestowed various Scottish benefices on his favourites, among which was the prebend of Old Roxburgh, with the canon's stall pertaining to it. These, in 1337, were bestowed on Andrew Ormiston.³ If Hugh Douglas had formerly held this rectory, he must have been dispossessed; but except the probability that he was so treated, nothing has been discovered as to his movements up to the time when, by the death of his nephew, he succeeded to the Douglas estates. That he did so succeed is proved by later events, for after the return of King David the Second from France to Scotland in 1341, an arrangement seems to have been come to by which Hugh Douglas served himself heir to his brother Sir James, who had died last infert in the Douglas lands.

While thus in possession of the Douglas territory, Hugh Douglas made several grants to William Douglas of Lothian, evidently as a reward for his vigour in defending Douglasdale, and especially Jedburgh Forest, from the English. The first of these grants included the half of the barony of

¹ *Rotuli Scotie*, vol. i. p. 280.

² *Froissart*, *Johnes' ed.*, vol. i. p. 77.

³ *Rotuli Scotie*, vol. i. p. 516.

Westerkirk, with the exception of the manor place and demesne lands of the same, which were reserved to the granter and his heirs. Apparently at the same time Lord Hugh granted to Sir William Douglas the barony of Stablgorton, reserving only the castle and the cotlaw. By a third charter, Sir William Douglas received the whole land of Polbothy (now Polmoody). Some of the witnesses to this charter are identical with the witnesses to the two former, from which it may be inferred that all three were granted about the same time, and before the 16th of February 1341-2.¹

On this last-mentioned date Sir William Douglas of Lothian received from King David the Second, under conditions afterwards narrated in the memoir of the first Earl, a charter of the lordship of Liddesdale, whence he derived the title "Lord of Liddesdale," or the "Knight of Liddesdale," by which name he is best known in history, and which, in his own day, distinguished him from other members of the illustrious Douglas family.² It was as Lord of Liddesdale that Sir William Douglas obtained a fourth charter from his kinsman and chief, Hugh, Lord of Douglas, of certain lands lying in the town and territory of Merton, forfeited by Richard Knowte, in the superior's hands.³ This charter, in which Hugh assumes the baronial title, must have been granted between the 16th February 1341-2, when William Douglas became Lord of Liddesdale, and before the 26th of May 1342, at which date Hugh, Lord of Douglas, made a formal resignation of the Douglas possessions.

Besides these minor grants, Hugh, Lord of Douglas, made a formal resignation of the Douglas estates in favour of certain heirs of entail. In carrying out this latest transaction he appeared personally before King David the Second, and many prelates of the realm, at Aberdeen, on 26th May 1342, and then and there, as brother and heir of the late Sir James, Lord of Douglas, formally

¹ Registrum Honoris de Morton, vol. ii, pp. 89-92.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93.

resigned the lands of Douglasdale, Carmichael, Forest of Selkirk, Lauderdale, Bethocrule, Eskdale, Stablgorton, Buittle in Galloway, Romanno, and the farm of Rutherglen, all as held of the Crown. This was done for the purpose of entailing them to the next heirs, who are named in the charter of regrant by the same king, given three days afterwards at Dundee, first, William of Douglas, son and heir of the late Archibald of Douglas, knight, brother of the said deceased James, and his lawful heirs-male; failing whom, the succession opened by a special royal grant to Sir William Douglas of Liddesdale, and his lawful heirs-male, whose services to the Crown and kingdom the king acknowledged as being numerous and beneficial; and, failing them, to Archibald Douglas, son of the said deceased James, Lord of Douglas, and his heirs-male. These all failing, the lauds were to revert to the true and nearest heirs of Lord Hugh by right of succession.¹

Hugh, Lord of Douglas, about this time obtained or resumed possession of the prebend of Old Roxburgh, and held it at least for some years. It had been granted by King Edward the Third, in 1337, to Andrew of Ormaiston,² but the expulsion of the English from Roxburgh Castle and its neighbourhood, in 1341, left the prebend again vacant. If alive at the time of the battle of Durham in 1346, Lord Hugh must by that event have been dispossessed in turn, as his prebend was presented by King Edward the Third, in or before 1347, to Richard Swynhop. The royal mandate instructs William de Kelleseye, chancellor and chamberlain of Berwick-on-Tweed, to see that peaceful possession of "the prebend of Old Roxburgh, which Hugh de Douglas, clerk, lately held in the cathedral church of Glasgow, now vacant and in our gift," with its fruits and profits, was secured to Richard Swynhop.³ The prebend was afterwards, in 1352, assigned by the same authority to

¹ Vol. iii. of this work. The original charter is lost, but a transumpt made in 1391, at the instance of the last-named heir of entail,

Archibald, third Earl of Douglas, is still preserved. ² *Rotuli Scotiae*, vol. i. p. 516.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 709.

William de Emeldon, when its previous possession by Hugh Lord of Douglas is again adverted to by the King of England, who adds that it is now vacant and in his gift by reason of the temporalities of the Bishop of Glasgow coming into his hands through the war with Scotland.¹

Hugh, Lord of Douglas, was apparently still alive in 1347, perhaps later, but little further has been ascertained regarding him. Besides the charters referred to, he left an enduring memorial of his short enjoyment of the Douglas estates in the foundation of a chapel in honour of St. John the Baptist, at Crookboat of Douglas, the junction of the Douglas with the Clyde. He endowed the chapel with a piece of land of the value of two merks of old extent, between Hoilgutter on the east and West Burn on the west, the other boundaries being the Douglas river and the highway, with pasturage for four horses on the hill of Drumalbin, and certain fees which were wont to be paid as farms from Drumalbin. The fee from the ferry also was granted to the chaplain, provision being made for keeping the boat in repair. The neighbouring lands and tenants supplied meal, thus: Weirland, half a boll; the castle, a boll; the rector, a boll and a stone of cheese; the two mills, one boll; the Prior of Lesmahagow, according to custom, a boll of meal and a stone of cheese; while every house in the muirland of Douglas was to furnish the best cheese, which, however, could be commuted for two pennies, if the chaplain or his servant refused the cheese. If any one unbecomingly declined to pay the fee, the boatman, as the servant of the Lord, was to seize anything he pleased, until he was fully satisfied. Such was the endowment of this chaplainry, as ascertained by an inquest held among the inhabitants of the district in 1550, on the occasion of the appointment by Archibald, sixth Earl of Angus, of his chaplain, Sir William Bell, vicar of Pettinain, to the vacant benefice.²

The seal used by Lord Hugh in the grants of lands made by him is still

¹ *Rotuli Scotie*, vol. i. p. 749.

² Vol. iii. of this work, pp. 242-244.

attached to the charter of Westerkirk among the Morton muniments. It has been described in the Catalogue of Scottish Seals, by Mr. Henry Laing, as representing "a knight on horseback, bearing a shield, on which there can still be seen the Douglas heart;" but this is erroneous. The seal, of which a facsimile is here given, is somewhat broken, but really represents a unicorn, bearing on its back a shield, the upper part of which is gone, but showing a heart in base. This is an early instance of the unicorn being adopted in connection with heraldry. The background of the seal is semé of mullets, arranged in groups of three. It is surrounded by the legend

[S. HUGONI]S DE DOWGLAS CANONIC · ·

The legend, also, is erroneously printed by Laing as "S. Hugonis Dowglas canno mora."



By virtue of the resignation made by this Hugh Douglas, and the regrant by King David the Second following thereon, William Douglas, son of Sir Archibald Douglas the Regent, succeeded to the territorial estates and title of the Lord of Douglas. But before proceeding with his memoir, the services of his father, and the eminent position in the State which he attained, demand a special notice.