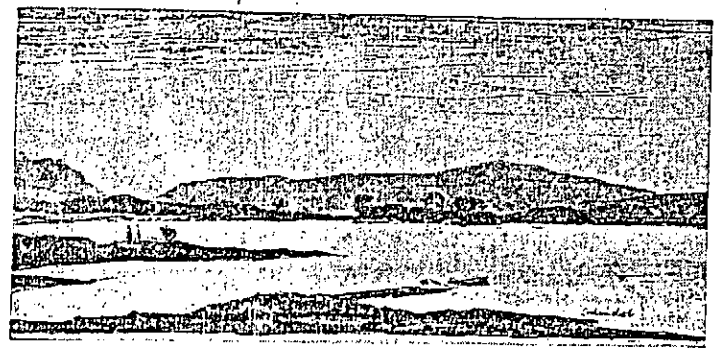


STON GARDEN 2001  
HIGHWAYS BYWAYS CEMETERY  
HIGHWAYS

THE HEN WIFE

285

unusual interest, bears the title "Portrait of Hen Wife 1706". This shows a shrewd and determined old woman, one who held an office that was of considerable importance in the families of Highland chiefs. The tenants in those days paid a part of their rent in hens. When the hens were brought to the castle the Hen Wife carefully examined them, and if they were below the required standard made the tenant bring more hens. The



Lochindorb

receipts for the hens are still kept in Castle Grant ; they show that the tenants paid twenty hens at intervals of six months.

Although it is some little distance away from the country of Grantown-on-Spey, a few words should perhaps be written on the historic castle on Lochindorb. This loch lies about midway between the rivers Findhorn and Spey, and the castle stands on a small island in the loch. For centuries the castle has been a ruin, yet its strong walls remain. Shaw mentions that in the year 1335, when the Earl of March defeated and killed David de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, at Kilblain, and raised the siege of Kildrummy Castle, the Earl of Athole's lady fled to the castle of Lochindorb. Sir Alexander Gordon laid siege to it, but next year King Edward (Edward the Third) of England obliged him to desist. In the year 1606 the Earl of Moray, Superior of the district, disposed to Sir John Campbell of Calder certain lands,

286

LOCHINDORB CASTLE

" together with the Loch of Lochindorb, with the houses in it, and the neighbouring Shielings "

At the time of Edward I, the castle of Lochindorb was a strong fortress in the possession of the Comyns. King Edward (grandfather of Edward III who later besieged it) captured the castle, and occupied it for some time. He did not indeed take the castle without a hard struggle, but his investing force time and again hurled their engines of war at the massive building on its small island, and at last breached its walls. The site on the south-east bank of the loch where the besiegers encamped is still known.

In Shaw (vol. i, p. 235) it is mentioned that within the walls of the castle are the vestiges of houses and those of a church. In the same volume and page is an interesting account of a plant, known locally as Lochindorb kail, which grows on the castle island. This is said to be a mixture of red cabbage and common turnip, sowed by the last possessor of the place. These plants were used as greens at the tables of the country people, and were transplanted into their gardens : young cattle were also ferried to the island in order to feed upon them. Some of the turnip-shaped roots of the plants were, it is said, almost one pound in weight in favoured situations.

R.S.

Jan might find this of interest

Jan

19/4/86