gister ; but his attempt was defeated by the dexterity of Sir Thomas Hamilton, afterwards successively earl of Mel­rose and of Haddington. “ Thinking to get his son pro­vided to his office,” says Spotswood, he “ had sent him to court with a dimission of the place, but with a charge not to use it, unless he found the king willing to admit him : yet he, abused by some politick wits, made a resignation of the office, accepting an ordinary place among the Lords of Session. The office upon his resignation was presently disponed to the advocate ; which grieved the father be­yond all measure. And the case indeed was pitiful, and much regrated by all honest men ; for he had been a man much employed, and honoured with divers legations, which he discharged with good credit, and now in age to be cir­cumvented in this sort by the simplicity or folly of his son, 'twas held lamentable. The king being informed of the abuse by the old mans complaint, was very careful to satisfie him, and to have the son reconciled to his father, which after some travel was brought to pass : yet so ex­ceeding was the old man’s discontent, as within a few days he deceased.”@@1 Grief however is seldom so rapidly fatal. Skene resigned his office in the year 1612, and he survived till the 16th of March 1617.

At that period the legal profession not unfrequently opened the road to emoluments and wealth comparatively great. He acquired the demesnes of Curriehill and Red- hall in the county of Edinburgh, and Edinganoch in the county of Aberdeen. His title on the bench was Lord Curriehill. His son Sir James Skene succeeded him on the 12th of June 1612, and became president of the Court of Session on the 14th of February 1626. On the 15th of October 1633, he died in his own house near the gram­mar school. The second son, named John, was appointed one of the principal clerks of Session in 1614. He purchased the estate of Hallyards. About twenty years ago, his last descendant, Elizabeth Skene, bequeathed to the Advocates Library a collection of family papers, together with a very curious collection of ancient music, which appears to have belonged to this ancestor. The *Shene Papers* have been carefully bound in a folio volume ; and the music has very recently been published by Mr. Dauney, who has added a copious and elaborate introduction, together with notes and illustrations.@@2 Alexander, the third son of Sir John Skene, was clerk of the registration of hornings. Beside these three sons, he had four daughters. The eldest daughter became the wife of Alexander Hay of Fosterseat, a judge and privy councillor. The second daughter was married to Sir William Scott of Ardross ; the third to Robert Lermont, advocate, brother to Lermont of Balcomy ; and the fourth to Sir Robert Richardson of Pencaitland.@@3

The clerk register had a brother named Alexander, who was likewise an advocate and an author. For some time at least, he must have adhered to the popish church ; for we find that in 1561 he was committed to prison by the ma­gistrates of Edinburgh for attending mass, but was released at the intercession of William Skene.@@4 This was apparently his brother, who was commissary of St. Andrews, and pro­fessor of law in that university. Of his method of teach­ing, we find an account in the very curious Diary of a pupil, who relinquished the study of law for that of di­vinity. “ In the thrid and fourt yeirs of my course, at the direction of my father. I hard the comissar, Mr. Wilyeam

Skein, teatche Cicero de Legibus, and diuerss partes of the Institutiones of Justinian. I was burdet in the houss of a man of law, a verie guid honest man, Andro Greine be nam, wha louit me exceiding weill, wbase wyff also was an of my mothers [freinds] : I am sure sche haid nocht sone nor bern sche loued better. This lawier tuk me to the consistorie with him, whar the comissar wald tak pleasour to schaw ws the practise in judgment of that quhilk he teatched in the scholles. He was a man of skill and guid conscience in his calling, lernit and diligent in his profes­sion, and tuk delyt in na thing mair nor to repeat ower and ower again to anie schollar that wald ask him the things he haid bein teatching.”@@5 (x.)

SKEW Bridge. Square arches, or those which stand at right angles to their abutments, and exert their thrust in that direction, have been already treated at considerable length under the article Bridge. Till lately, any other form of arch was rarely to be met with. But there are cases of frequent occurrence, in which various sorts of passages and courses necessarily cross each other obliquely, as well as on different levels;@@6 and where, on account of the difficulty or impossibility of constructing a square bridge, which should both have sufficient strength, and, at the same time, leave the lower passage quite clear, a different form of arch, placed obliquely to the abutments, and yet exerting its thrust in the direction of the upper passage, is almost the only prac­ticable alternative. Such a structure is called a *shew* bridge, and is very frequently required since the more general in­troduction of railways, in which it is of great consequence to preserve as direct or straight a line as possible. Nay, it is not uncommon for a railway to have to traverse districts in which it may neither be allowable nor practicable to use any means of avoiding the obliquity with which it may have to cross canals, roads, &c.; its course being so much con­trolled by conflicting interests, and by the natural features of the country.

If a common square bridge were to be employed in the circumstances just supposed, namely, in which the passages mutually intersecting obliquely, cannot be so diverted as to cross at right angles, then the arch must either be built stretching in the direction of the upper passage, and of suf­ficient span to allow the lower passage, with its course un­altered, to pass uninterruptedly under it ; or, it must be built stretching at right angles to the lower passage, and having its embankments and abutments so much extended, that the whole structure may both stand securely, and fur­nish sufficient area above for the upper passage to continue its oblique course over it unaltered. An arch partaking of both these forms might, it is true, be employed ; but to such expedients, a proper skew bridge is in general greatly pre­ferable, and is indeed sometimes the only allowable form of construction that will serve the purpose required. As for any alteration in the old courses, they would often be in­compatible with the particular or vested rights of proprie­tors, and especially with the provisions which are generally inserted in the acts of Parliament expressly prohibiting any alteration to be made in the original courses of canals, &c.; and even were there no such restrictions, the diversion of the courses might be attended with great expense, and might occasion much inconvenience to the traffic. The wide or broad arch again, is a most unscientific mode of overcom­ing the difficulty. Room for it, with the requisite embank­ments, could not always be had, and it would, besides, great­

@@@, Spotswood’s Hist, of the Church of Scotland, p. 517.

@@@\* Ancient Scotish Melodies, from a manuscript of the reign of King James VI., with an introductory Enquiry illustrative of the History of the Music of Scotland, by William Daυney, Esq., F.S.A. Scot. Edinb. 1838, 4to.

@@@3 Cowper's Account of Sir John Skene, Lord Curriehill, Clerk Register, bis Predecessors and Successors, MS. The author of this account, Robert the brother of Sir John Cowper of Gogar, died at Balberton near Edinburgh in 1726, in the ninetieth year of his age.

@@@4 M'Crie's Life of Andrew Melville, vol. i. p. 113.

@@@» Diary of James Melville, p. 23. Edinb. 1829, 4to.

@@@\* Indeed to avoid interruptions and accidents, it is always desirable that any crossings with a railway should take place on different levels. The like may be said of canals, which besides, cannot, without some kind of moveable bridges, be crossed closely above by any sort of road, and in fact can only be crossed quite on the same level by some water course ; not to say any thing of fording or wading through them.