

ART. XIII.—*The Postern Door of Carlisle Castle.* By
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Read at Seascale, June 19th, 1913.

IN September 1912, H. M. Office of Works removed certain modern buildings which had been erected against the inner face of the west curtain wall of Carlisle Castle, and exposed to view the inside of the postern door. This postern is the one reputed to have been used in the famous Buccleugh raid for the liberation of Kinmont Willie.

The door is in the west curtain of the outer ward of the Castle, about midway between the angles or south and north bastions, and 20 feet from the small mural turret. It opened originally upon the steep scarp down to the river Caldew, which formed one of the outer defences on this side of the castle. The curtain at this point is of Norman date, about 7 feet 3 inches thick, and the door is an insertion of probably the fifteenth century. It has always been visible from the outside of the castle, but for many years was entirely walled up on the inside, and covered by modern barrack offices. The external threshold is some 5 feet below the present level of the castle yard, and this indicates the amount of filling and levelling in the outer ward in the time of Henry VIII.

The external opening is about 4 feet wide by 7 feet high and has a flat stone head ; the internal opening has a segmental arch, 8 feet high to the springing line. There are no signs in the masonry of any holes for a horizontal draw-bar, but on the hinge or hanging side of the opening the masonry has been at some time roughly cut away to enable the door to be lifted off its hinges. The door

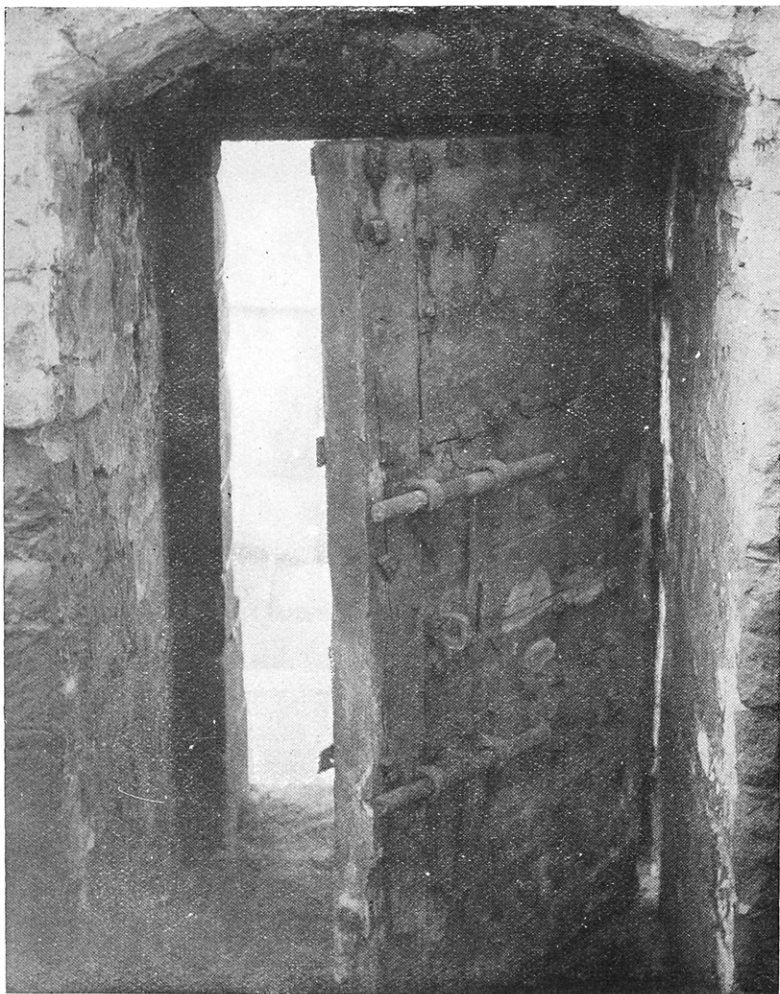


CARLISLE CASTLE, POSTERN DOOR,
External View.

Phot. by C. J. F. Martindale.

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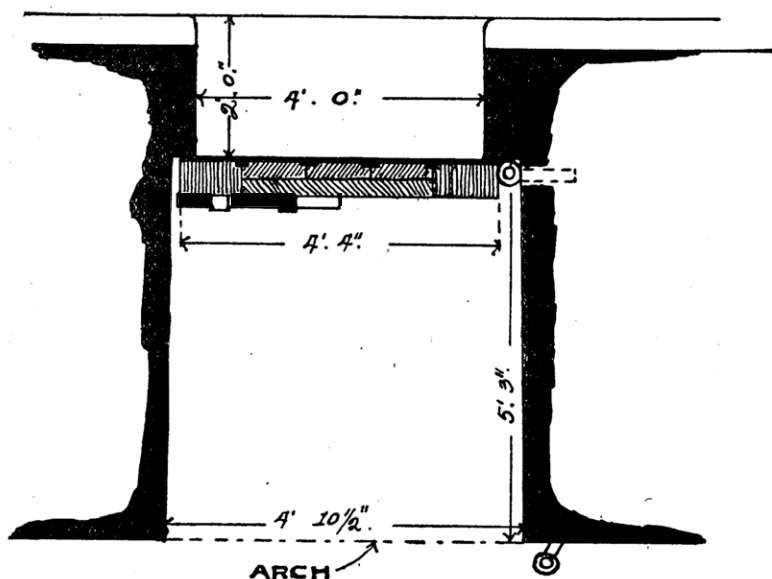
CARLISLE CASTLE, POSTERN DOOR,
Internal View.

Phot. by C. J. F. Martindale.

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itself is of oak, 4 feet 4 inches wide and 7 feet 6 inches high, very massive in construction, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and strengthened with iron bands and bars. The "Stiles" are 8 inches by 5 inches, and filled in with vertical boards on the external face and horizontal boards on the internal.

OUTSIDE.



INSIDE.

It is further strengthened on the outside by four vertical iron bars and four horizontal bands, each $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch, which latter extend across the full width of the door. The bars are secured to the door by iron bolts with diamond-shaped washers on the inside; the ends are riveted. The hinges, three in number, are secured by square-headed nails clinched on the inside, and have very massive eyes to rest on, equally strong, and massive

crooks built into the wall. All these remain *in situ*, but the bottom hinge and lower part of the door were very much decayed from the damp. The door when closed was fastened by two iron bolts, 2 feet 3 inches long and $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch in diameter, passing through large wrought-iron sockets let into the masonry and run with lead. Each bolt has a long tab and a forged eye; the top one turned down and the lower one up, and the eyes pass over a single centre hasp which is then secured by a padlock.

The position of the door in the wall will be seen on referring to the plan. On the inside or courtyard face of the wall two crooks (there have been three) remain for an inner or second door or gate, which was removed or destroyed at the time when the inside of the opening was walled up.

The door has been repaired in a most careful and conservative manner by the Office of Works and replaced in its original position; when complete it will perform its original purpose.
