

ART. XI.—*The Luck of Burrell Green.* By D. SCOTT.
Read at Great Salkeld Institute, September 5th, 1912.

MY duty is that of telling a twice-told tale when showing to you the Luck of Burrell Green. One cannot go to original sources for information, because none are known to exist. We have to depend entirely, or almost entirely, on tradition, and even that is confined to a few points—for one dare not venture to call them facts.

Burrell Green is a farmhouse in this parish, and a short distance from this Institute. Having purchased it some years ago, our host, Mr. Heywood Thompson, also became the owner of the Luck. As you will see, it is a brass dish of early embossed work, $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. It is, I think, worthy of note, when considering the antiquity of the Luck, that none of the historians of the county mention it; nor is any reference to the dish to be found in such a modern book as Samuel Jefferson's "Leath Ward" (1840). The first printed account of it I have been able to trace is to be found in the "Art Journal" for December, 1879, by Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, F.S.A., and the article was accompanied by an engraving from a painting by Mr. Jacob Thompson, who was then living at Hackthorpe.

The next account, and the earliest local one, appeared in the *Transactions* of this Society (o.s. xv., p. 136) in a paper read at Penrith in September, 1897, after the Society had visited Great Salkeld. Mr. John Lamb, the author of that paper, was the son of the owner and occupier of Burrell Green, and so the possessor of the Luck. For at least three generations his family had owned the place. He, if any one, should have been able to discover its history, but apparently he could

Round the central "wrythen" flutes, in black or late Gothic letters, were the words, "Mary . Mother . Of . Jesus . Saviour : Of . Men." On the outer ring, in modern lettering, was the couplet :

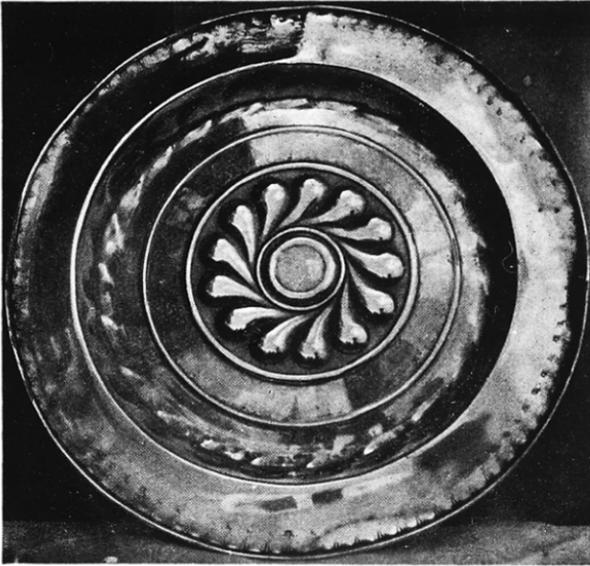
IF THIS DISH BE SOLD OR GI'EN,
FAREWELL THE LUCK OF BURRELL GREEN.

Mr. Hartshorne in his note added : " Such a travestie of picturesque antiquity tends to shake the faith in luck altogether." He advanced the theory that this Luck may have done duty as the alms-dish in a church, but the Rev. A. G. Loftie, late Rector of Great Salkeld, in his history of the parish, says it had not been part of the church plate of Great Salkeld. He also pointed out that

Such words [as were in the inscription] were commonly used in the olden time for the decoration of ordinary household articles. It is most probably a domestic platter or dish of the sixteenth century, that is about the same date as the Elizabethan silver cup in the church, which bears the York date letter for 1567-8.

Between 1879 and 1897 the polishing propensities of those who had charge of the Luck had resulted in the letters of the inscriptions being rubbed away ; as you will perceive there are no letters now capable of being completely traced. This must not be put down to mere perversity ; the brass tarnishes easily, and so needs frequent cleaning.

As to how the dish advanced from the dignity of a mere household dish to a legendary Luck, Mr. Lamb quotes the tradition that " it was given to the family residing there long ago by a ' Hob-i'-the-Hurst,' or by a witch or soothsayer, to whom kindness had been shown," with the injunction contained in the rhyme. I am told that another version of the gift runs that the good fortune would disappear if the Luck were to pass out of the



THE LUCK OF BURRELL GREEN.

Phot. by Mr. A. Smith, Great Salkeld School.

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possession of the family at Burrell Green "either for love or money," but as a matter of hard fact there have been two such owners in recent years.

That the owners of the Luck believed it to possess uncanny attributes is shown by a fact recorded by Mr. Lamb, that "on the day Burrell Green last changed owners, the Luck fell down three times in succession from its usual position, a circumstance which at that time had not been known to have occurred before, it always having been kept in a secure place."

To the present esteemed owner may the Luck always bring the best of good fortune!