



ARMORIAL PANEL, from Rowcliffe Lane, Penrith.

Phot. by Geo. Reed, Penrith.

TO FACE P. 285.

ART. XXVIII.—*An armorial panel found at Penrith.* By
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Read at Penrith, September 5th, 1912.

THE panel, of which an illustration is given opposite, was found in an old house in Rowcliffe Lane, Penrith. The property belongs to Mr. Joseph Cowper, of Thackagate. The old buildings were being taken down last summer (1911) for reconstruction, when this panel was discovered. It was over the fireplace, and had been carefully protected for many years by plaster, stoothing having been placed off the wall to keep the coat of arms from being damaged. It was carefully cut out by Mr. Cowper and he had it set on a cement foundation, to keep it from any harm. It seems to represent the arms of Queen Elizabeth. I have examined carefully all the deeds and papers in relation to the property and could not find anything very definite, except that there appears to have been a brewhouse near the site in 1736. Rowcliffe Lane, I am told, was the main street or coach road through the town, and I understand there were many hostleries in it. It is quite possible that this house has been an inn, and, in honour of the Queen, her coat of arms was placed in the dining room. As Queen Elizabeth had interest in the Forest of Inglewood, the house may have been the residence of some Crown official; the adjoining property, also belonging to Mr. Cowper, has the appearance of a house of no mean order, and one of the rooms has a very beautiful cornice with enrichments.

NOTE BY J. F. CURWEN, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

The coat of arms displayed on the plaster shield would be described as :—

Quarterly, the arms of France and England, over all a cross fourchée. Surrounded by a Garter bearing the motto of the Order of the Garter, "Honi soit qui mal y pense." Above the same, a Sovereign's Helmet and thereon a mantle of Cloth of Gold, doubled Ermine, adorned with an Imperial Crown and surmounted by a Lion passant guardant, crowned with a like Crown, as Crest.

Supported on the dexter side with a Lion rampant Imperially Crowned, and on the sinister side with a Dragon rampant. Below, the initials E.R., and upon a label the ancient War-cry, "Dieu et mon droit."

The arms may stand for either Edward VI. or Elizabeth. I am rather inclined to the former (1) by the attenuated bodies of the supporters and (2) by the Dragon. Edw. VI. always used the Lion and the Dragon, and although Elizabeth sometimes did, she more usually adopted the Lion and Greyhound as her supporters. However, I do not place much reliance on this, as the work is not done by a professional worker in heraldry; and this is proved by the fact that he has placed the Lion looking towards the shield, instead of "guardant," *i.e.*, looking towards the spectator. Evidently he found it easier to depict the Lion's head in profile, and preferred the Dragon to the Greyhound.

At the close of Henry VIII.'s reign, which, to give time for the new art to spread northward, really means for us the reign of Edward VI., plasterers began to learn the power that lay within their reach for modelling ornamental shapes, and it became the height of fashion to indulge in this new art. Ornamental plaster ceilings and heraldic devices were quickly raised in the best houses throughout the country, and hostelries along the coach-roads vied with one another in their endeavour to show loyalty to the authorities by erecting the royal arms. Strangers on entering an inn were expected to drink the royal toast.

This shield was discovered in a house situated upon the ancient coach road through the town of Penrith; moreover, the house contains a very large room (now sub-divided), as is shown by the plaster cornice that runs around it and the molded plaster beams that cross it. May we not therefore infer that this was either a well-to-do merchant's house, or, more likely, one of the innumerable hostelries that lined the road?