

ART. IX.—*Thomas Machell, the Antiquary*. By the
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THE closing years of the 17th century saw a great advance in the study of local history, not least in the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, and in many ways this antiquarian activity finds its best expression in Edmund Gibson's new edition of Camden's *Britannia*, published in 1695. In it, besides Gibson's own contributions (which were mainly editorial), are included materials provided by correspondents from all parts of England; and in his preface Gibson specifically acknowledges his debt to three men whose names are well known to this Society:—

"*Westmorland* is engag'd to Mr. *Thomas Machel* for so many useful discoveries; as its neighbour *Cumberland* is to Dr. *Hugh Todd* Prebendary of the Church of Carlisle: and lastly, *Northumberland* to Mr. *William Nicolson*, Archdeacon of the same Church, eminent for his knowledge in the Languages and Antiquities of the Northern Nations. The same worthy Gentleman was pleas'd to improve this work by observations throughout the whole Province of *York*, the Antiquities whereof he has ready for the Press . . . The Translations of . . . *Cumberland*, and *Northumberland*, were sent us by the several Gentlemen who communicated their observations upon the respective Counties."¹

To at least one Cumbrian gentleman, Gibson's acknowledgements must have occasioned a little surprise. On 2 November 1694, a few months before the publication of Gibson's edition, William Gilpin had written to Sir

¹ It may be noted, in addition, that "The Catalogues of *Plants* at the end of each County were communicated by the Great Botanist of our age, Mr. *Ray*" According to Jonathan Boucher (*Hutchinson* ii 302) Ray was descended from the Reays of Bromfield, Cumberland.

John Lowther about certain deficiencies in Camden's treatment of Cumberland²: —

"I know not how it happens the description of it in Camden's *Britannia* seems less adorned than most others. Many of our antiquities are omitted; and the history of several changes of the inhabitants . . . is very defective . . . and the maps are abominably false in many particulars. But I believe my cousin Nicholson, arch-deacon of Carlisle and Dr. Todd have taken some pains in improving the chorography; & also the ancient history of Cumberland, & have likewise done something in natural history. But whether they have communicated their observations to the undertakers of the *New Britannia* I know not."

As to Westmorland, Gilpin has only an incidental piece of gossip to record³: —

"I hear Mr. Machell has offered the undertakers a map of Cumberland & Westmorland, but insists to have it dedicated to Lord Carlisle; which they refuse, being unwilling to offend others."

Gibson, Gilpin, Todd and Nicolson do not concern us now, but what of Thomas Machell, whose contributions were acknowledged by Gibson, for all that his offer of a map was rejected? Almost every writer who has had occasion to make mention of Machell has called him "the antiquary" (as though he alone deserved that title), and Chancellor Ferguson went so far as to term him the man "whom we may consider to be the father of all Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquaries".⁴ The claim cannot be accepted without qualification, as we shall be seeing presently; but the very fact that it has been made, and made by such a pillar of our Society as Ferguson, might lead us to expect that there would be a full-length study of the man to be found somewhere. But Machell did not receive a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and even in our own *Transactions* it is remarkable that he has never received more than

² *Memoirs of the Gilpin family*, ed. William Jackson (= this Society's Extra Series ii, 1879), 35.

³ *Op. cit.*, 36.

⁴ CWI iv 1.

incidental treatment. The present sketch is therefore offered as a tribute to his memory, and an attempt to assess the importance of his influence on the study of the history and antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland. It does not pretend to be more than a sketch, but we hope that it may induce someone to undertake the fuller study which the interest of its subject deserves.

The time-table of Machell's life is quickly told. He was born in 1647, at Crackenthorpe Hall, where his forebears had been settled since Norman times and in all probability earlier; he was baptized at Bongate church on 20 June that year. It is not recorded where he was first educated, but it seems probable *a priori* that he went to Appleby grammar school, with which his family had very close connections in the 17th century. He went up to Oxford at sixteen, matriculating on 5 February 1663/4 as a member of Queen's College, ever the magnet for Cumberland and Westmorland scholars; he graduated B.A. on 29 October 1668 and proceeded to M.A. on 11 March 1671/2, becoming a fellow of Queen's (where Nicolson, as we shall see, was to be one of his pupils) on 12 December 1672. Later in life, it may be noted, he became D.D. and F.R.S. and a fellow of the Oxford Philosophical Society (in return for sending it a Roman "urn" found at Kirkby Thore in 1687). On 15 August 1677 he was instituted to the rectory of Kirkby Thore, on the presentation of the earl of Thanet, and on 27 June 1679 he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to the king, Charles II. He married Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of William Godson, lord of the manor of Dogmersfield, Hants. (the advowson of which Machell himself later purchased); she was a widow, with one son, Roger (as is shown by his will), but further details of her are still to seek, apart from the fact that she bore him two sons and five daughters, and that she was buried at Kirkby Thore on 22 March 1700/01. Machell himself made his will on 19 October 1698 and modified it in one detail on

5 November; a week later, he was buried on the south side of the altar in the chancel of his church. The inventory of his goods is dated 5 December 1698, but his will was not proved until 28 February 1698/99; the texts of both documents were printed by Chancellor Ferguson in an early volume of our *Transactions*.⁵

Before we consider Machell's claim to be remembered as an antiquary, and as an architect too, it will be worth while to trace his influence on later generations of students. The story starts with a passage in his will:—

"And for those trivial collections of mine in order to an History of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland with all my papers and Coyns relating thereto I will that the same shall belong to my said wife & children & I will that the said Mr. Shepherd do deliver them to Mr. Archdeacon Nicholson whom I doe entrust to peruse the same and put them in order, and if the Gentlemen of the said Counties will be at Cost with the Cutts that they may be printed to the use & benefit of my said wife & children"

Nicolson duly received the papers; what he did with them may best be set forth in his own words, written in the first of the six volumes into which he had them all bound up:—

"This and the five following volumes (marked on the back T.M. vol. I., T.M. vol. II., &c.) are made up of loose papers left to me by their author, Mr. Thomas Machell, late Rector of Kirkby Thore; with his request that (if it might be readily done) they should be put into form and offer'd to some bookseller for ye benefit of his widow and children. Upon perusal of 'em I found the collection so imperfect, raw, and undigested, that 'twas impossible to bring them (of 'emselves) to any such account as the good man hoped for. Since, it appeared that he had bestow'd more pains on ye Family of Machel than on the Pedigrees of all the rest of the Gentry in the two counties, and that the single parish of Kirkbythore was more labour'd than all besides in the bottome of Westmorland. In the transcript of Records, &c., he has made use of other men's hands. As (particularly) in those put out of the Tower in the 4th volume, I find a good many of my own writing. This drudgery (I remember) I was unwillingly putt upon in 1678, when Mr. M. was

⁵ CWI iv 4-5.

fellow and I Taberdar of Qu. College, and (being then in attendance on Mr. Secretary Williamson⁶) in dayly expectance of being sent beyond sea. Others are copied by W. Atkinson (afterwards Fellow of the said College), who was not well acquainted with old Records . . . For the Readers further assistance I have drawn up a short abstract of the contents of every volume, which is prefixed to each respectively, and added an alphabetical index in the end of all of them severally. In the vacant leaves of the parishes I have here and there added (as I may probably continue to do) some occasional notes, as they fell in my way, omitted by the Author."

It will be seen that Nicolson has tacitly assumed that Machell's papers had been left to him, and not merely placed in his hands for perusal and putting into order; the event may cause us to be thankful, even though the antiquary's will makes it clear that he never contemplated giving the papers to his former pupil. Nicolson's own estimate of their value is remarkable, as much for its criticisms (already quoted) as for the shrewd assessment of the antiquary's strong points:—

"Mr. Machel's own chief excellency was in drawing coats of Arms, Prospects of Churches and Houses, &c. And whoever shall hereafter perfect his Design in furnishing the Curious with such an History of Cumberland and Westmorland, as Sr. W. Dugdale has given of Warwickshire may here have a good share of the ornamental part of the work. For example:—

1. Coats of arms of the Families of Note in both counties are fairly drawn.
2. Roman monuments are well drawn.
3. Prospects of Churches, Chappels, and the Seats of Nobility and Gentry.
4. Monuments in Churches, Seals, & modern."

The implication is clear enough, that Nicolson thought Machell's drawings to be the most useful part of the collections, though the labour of indexing and the binding up of the six volumes will serve to emphasize that he did

⁶ For Sir Joseph Williamson, the Cumberland man who incidentally had been Daniel Fleming's Servitor at Queen's, cf. D.N.B. lxii 2-7, citing (Jonathan Boucher in) Hutchinson's *Cumberland* ii 244 f., &c.: he was secretary of state from 1674 to December 1678.

assign real value to Machell's materials, however imperfect they might be; and the sequel will show that they were of decisive value to subsequent writers.

Nicolson & Burn's *History of Westmorland & Cumberland*, as is well known, relies very largely on Machell for its family history. In their introduction (i, p. ii f.) they note that Machell "from his first entrance in the university to the day of his death, employed himself with unwearied assiduity in collecting materials for an history of Westmorland; and as his collections multiplied, an history also of Cumberland." They give a condensed version of Nicolson's account, quoted above, adding that he lodged the six volumes "in the library of the dean and chapter of Carlisle, that they might be made use of, if any person afterwards should undertake an history of the said two counties", and providing the following conspectus of what was comprised in them:—

"This collection of Mr. Machel consists, first, of extracts from the evidences at Appleby castle and at Skipton castle (another seignory belonging to the lords of Westmorland). Next, Mr. Machel by himself, and by divers amanuenses, made many extracts from the records in the Rolls chapel and in the Tower; unto which he had free access by the friendship of Sir Joseph Williamson, secretary of state, who had formerly been fellow of the aforesaid college. He also made extracts from the private evidences of several ancient families; which extracts are become more valuable, as many of the originals are now lost. Mr. Machel had also consulted the records in the heralds office, and the separate collections of several particular heralds, and especially of Sir William Dugdale his intimate friend . . ."

It will be seen that, in consonance with the writers' particular interests, it is the documentary side which Bishop Nicolson had not praised, rather than the drawings which he thought particularly excellent, which now occupy the centre of the stage; and later historians of the two counties, relying largely on Nicolson and Burn, served to disseminate the view that Machell was just another (though perhaps an unusually assiduous) local antiquary, interested in pedigrees and descents of property

but little else; that is the impression which one would get from a glance at Hutchinson's *Cumberland*, or the Lysons' volume, or Hodgson's *Westmorland*; and that will best explain Chancellor Ferguson's earliest traceable reference to Machell as "our great local dryasdust".⁷

None of these later writers seems to have bothered to look at the collections themselves; but there was an honourable exception in Samuel Jefferson, in whose *History and Antiquities of Carlisle* (1838), 136, a footnote gives the only printed list of the principal contents of them; it deserves quotation in full:

"vol. I contains collections respecting the ancient Britons and Romans; an attempt towards a general description of Westmorland, &c.: vol. II., *villare alphabeticum*, for the barony of Kendal; description of the parishes in the said barony, with the churches, coats of arms, &c., and a journal of the author's travels in the said barony: vol. III., *villare* of Westmorland and Cumberland; collections about king Arthur, Marius and Uter Pendragon: vol. IV., a view of the first-fruits and tenths within the diocese of Carlisle; collections relating to the families of Vipont and Clifford; abbreviations of words and law terms occurring in old records explained; extracts from charters, rolls, and escheats, in the Tower, relating to lands in Westmorland and Cumberland; collections out of the registers of Wetheral and Holme Cultram abbeys, in the dean and chapter's library: vol. V., charter of the borough of Appleby; and pedigrees and conveyances of the families of Crackanthorpe, Machel, &c.: vol. VI., a copy of John Denton's MS. history of Cumberland; a collection of Roman inscriptions; excerpts from Dugdale's *Monasticon*; arms of the chief families of Cumberland and Westmorland; a discourse on titles of honour in general; an anonymous [Edmund Sandford's] description of Cumberland, written about the year 1675; inquisitions concerning lands at Penrith, taken upon the death of Alexander III., king of Scotland; a list of the sheriffs of both counties from the reign of Henry II.; and R. Singleton's full account of the parish of Melmerby."

The plans and drawings are still unmentioned, but at least Jefferson sets forth enough evidence to show how

⁷ CW I ii 21 (*dryadust* is printed, but is presumably a printer's error); later in the same paper, Ferguson calls him "the compiler and antiquarian" (*ibid.*, 25).

widely Machell had cast his antiquarian net; by comparison with the Dentons or Sandford or Sir Daniel Fleming himself, he had a far wider range of interests — and a mere glance at the list of this Society's publications should suffice to show, already, how much of its wide field Machell had begun to cultivate.

But it was some time before our Society, in its early days, came to appreciate him for his true worth. That may have been partly due to the attitude of the dean and chapter, who for a time, in the mid-Victorian period, seem to have been reluctant to allow scholars access to their library. As far as we can see, the leaders in a new assessment of him were C. J. Ferguson and M. W. Taylor, to whose research on domestic architecture in our territory the Society owes so much. The former, in a study of Rose Castle and Dalston Hall, noted that Rose had been added to by Bishop Smith: —

"In so doing he had the assistance of the well-known local historian, Thomas Machell, vicar (*sic*) of Kirkby Thore. Machell seems not only to have been an historian, but also a great architect, for he states that he and one Addison of Kirkby Thore, were the first to introduce regular architecture into these parts. Hutton-in-the-Forest was altered by Addison, and if to him we are indebted for the beautiful entrance front, he was no mean architect. Machell, besides his other architectural efforts, designed the organ front at St. Laurence's, Appleby, of the Doric order, in which, as he notes down, the guttae, and triglyphs were rendered musical, and the fluting made with organ pipes."⁹

⁸ CW1 ii 152 ff., particularly 160.

⁹ Mr C. Roy Hudleston, F.S.A., points out to us that Canon James Wilson, in his *Rose Castle* (1912), 96, reproduced a ground-plan of the castle from the Machell MSS., vol. vi. He added that Machell is said to have assisted Bishop *Rainbow* in his scheme for the rebuilding of Rose. Confirmation, as Mr Hudleston points out, is to be found in the MSS., vol. i 538, which C. J. Ferguson was clearly drawing upon, though he does not say so: "Yet before I take leave of this Ancient Towne once famous for Trade I must observe to you that this village (as if the *Genii* of the place had not left it & forsaken it utterly) there are above 30 Artes and employments professed & practised at this very day; as First the most Beautifull Art of Architecture, w^{ch} (amongst many other) the present Rector hath some knowledge off; He, & one Addison (borne in this towne & contemporary with him) being the first introducers of Regular building into these Parts; Hutton Hall in the County of Cumberland was Altered by Addison; Rose Castle in Cumberland, Caesars Tower, Howgill Castle & Crackenthorp Hall in the County of Westm^rland by Mr Machell. And the Organ Loft in St. Laurence Appleby of the Dorrick order (w^{ch} has extraordinary fancy in it, the Guttal & Tri-glyphy being rendered Musicall, & the fluting turn'd into Organ pipes) was designed by him, & the Joyers taught how to worke by the scale."

C. J. Ferguson further suggested, in the light of an architectural study of Dalston Hall, that it too had been added to under Machell's direction, though it is not among the buildings referred to by Machell himself; subsequent writers have been content to accept his opinion, and quote it as a fact.

But it is perhaps M. W. Taylor's verdict which had the greatest effect in the eighteen-seventies, and which sums the matter up most concisely: "it is to his method and diligence as an antiquarian in collecting and recording, and preserving information concerning various parishes in the two counties, that all our local histories have hitherto been so much indebted."¹⁰

It was no doubt through C. J. Ferguson and M. W. Taylor that Chancellor Ferguson came to revise his estimate of Machell, substituting for "dryasdust" or "compiler and antiquarian" the arresting title of "father of all Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquaries". Chronologically, at least, it claims too much. Even if we leave out of account Edward Threlkeld and Reginald Bainbrigg, both men of real antiquarian interests but remembered as Camden's informants rather than for their own original work, we have still to remember John Denton of Cardew and Sir Daniel Fleming; and it seems best for us to accept the considered view of W. G. Collingwood, that it was John Denton who was the "pioneer of the labours of the Cumberland and Westmorland antiquaries".¹¹ Mere chronological priority, however, is really of little account in comparison with range of interests and wealth of material, and in these respects Machell stands head and shoulders above all other forerunners of our Society.

It is instructive to note what a variety of information

¹⁰ CWI ii 250 (in a paper on Crackenthorpe Hall); cf. also 251: Machell was "a passionate admirer and promoter of the pseudo-classic, and Palladian architecture . . ."

¹¹ *The memoirs of Sir Daniel Fleming* (= this Society's Tract Series xi, 1928), p.x.

his papers have yielded to our own contributors: the earliest account of the important stained glass at Windermere church, details of the Betham monument in Betham church, the association of St Ninian with Ninekirks and St Wilfrid with Brougham, modern farm-names on Hadrian's Wall, notes on the early days of Kirkby Lonsdale school, and the like. Indeed it would be fair to adapt R. G. Collingwood's observation about John Horsley and Hadrian's Wall to Machell and our two counties, saying that the student of Cumberland and Westmorland will neglect Thomas Machell at his peril. That applies in particular to the student of ecclesiastical and domestic architecture; it can be no accident that Machell's papers were laid under contribution by the Royal Commission in its Westmorland volume, for the state of Burneside Hall in his day, for the lay-out of the cell of Gilbertine Canons at Ravenstonedale, for the heraldic ceiling at Yanwath Hall, and of course for his observations at Watercrock and excavations at Kirkby Thore, as well as for his contribution to the architecture of Crackenthorpe Hall. When we bear in mind the restraint with which the Royal Commission allows itself to become enthusiastic, we may be all the more impressed on reading that Crackenthorpe's "front of 1685 is of considerable interest and the staircase of the same age is a noteworthy feature".¹² Curwen's *Castles and Towers* (= this Society's Extra Series xiii, 1913), by the same token, relies on Machell for important details of Hartley Castle, which he sketched a few years before Sir Christopher Musgrave demolished it completely, and for a plan of Wharton Hall; and it will be remembered that Machell's view of Kendal Castle, first reproduced in Mr Bouch's *Prelates & People of the Lake Counties*,¹³ gives important information about structures which have disappeared completely since his day.

¹² *RCHM Westmorland* 72 (cf. plates 70, for the front of the house, and 56, for the staircase).

¹³ Facing p. 137; cf. also CW2 li, facing p. 186.

A considered judgment of Machell as a scholar cannot be undertaken without a fuller survey of his literary remains than we have been able to undertake, even if we were competent to assess all portions of the wide field which he covered; but it will be proper for us to say something about the character of the Machell MSS., if only as a guide to future workers, and in defence of him (if defence be needed) against the charge implicit in Nicolson's rather condescending note. If the family of Machell and the parish of Kirkby Thore receive fuller attention than anything else, that is surely because it was on them that his researches began; and the MSS. represent an unfinished collection of notes, as well as rough drafts or in some cases fair copies of descriptions which were intended to be worked up into the book which Machell never lived to complete.

In some cases, these first drafts have suffered such additions and corrections that now it is practically impossible to read the text (so punctiliously did Nicolson retain the papers that came into his hands). His method of work seems to have been to go on his tours with a stock of sheets of paper, on which he jotted down or sketched whatever he wished to place on record; these sheets were bound up, by Nicolson, together with the abstract of documents and with Machell's own fair copies (as for example the portion of vol. vi which relates to Kirkby Thore, written for an Oxford head of house in an easily distinguishable and delightfully legible hand). An analytical study of the rough drafts would undoubtedly yield interesting information about Machell's mind, but it is one of the tasks which we can only indicate now, in the hope that someone may be prepared to undertake it. At the same time, it would be interesting to learn more about his friends and correspondents and casual informants, such as the schoolmaster of Windermere whom he sent up a ladder to examine the glass in the east window of the church (CW1 iv 71). We have noted

his friendship with Sir Joseph Williamson and Sir William Dugdale, as well as with Bishop Nicolson; but as yet we have not found the connection with Sir Daniel Fleming which might have been anticipated *a priori* (with Williamson, or the antiquities of Westmorland, as an obvious connecting link).¹⁴

An indication of Machell's quality as an observer is easily obtainable by reference to his work on Roman antiquities. Mention has been made, in a recent volume of *Transactions* (CW2 li 180 ff.), of his "pervestigation" of Hadrian's Wall and his precise definition of the whereabouts and modern names of several of its forts. Of his description of Watercrock R. G. Collingwood noted (CW2 xxx 103) that "it would be easy to draw the whole plan of the bath-house from Machell's account"; and we may add that Machell was not merely the first antiquary to identify Watercrock as a Roman site, but also the first antiquary to give a description of the appearance and lay-out of any Roman site in the north of Britain. Nicolson & Burn (i 108) and Collingwood (*loc. cit.*) made use of his account, and we need not say more about it now, though in a study of Watercrock there might be a little more to extract from it than has been done as yet. Nor need we now refer, except in passing, to his copying of inscriptions from Ambleside, Watercrock, Burrow or Kirkby Lonsdale: it was Chancellor Ferguson who dug those texts out of the MSS., passing them to Watkin for publication in the *Archaeological Journal* (whence they found their way into the *Ephemeris Epigraphica*), but for some reason not printing them in our own *Transactions*. But it will be appropriate, in a paper communicated at Kirkby Thore, to say something about his study of that site, which naturally caught most of his attention.

It seems clear that in his day there was a good deal more of the Roman fort, and of the external settlement, to be seen than in our time (even from the air); and

¹⁴ See, however, the appendix to this paper, p. 149 f.

Machell took steps, by excavation, to learn more. He discovered "channels of stone, leaden pipes for conveying water; urnes, altars and tiles with other fragments of Roman antiquities; and a number of coins that I have now by me" (to quote his own words). Of the walls he gave a meticulously careful account:—

"They were made of hewn stone each being two feet four inches broad so that the whole was nine feet four inches. The outmost wall was cemented to the very foundation with the best Roman mortar . . . the other three had their foundations first laid in clay. Then in a coarser sort of lime, and underneath was a pavement of cobbles to make the foundations more firme and durable . . . This fourfold wall had a sinke passing through which was laid at the bottom with a sort of gutter being four inches and about a foot over. Their edges were a course of hewn stone on either side to keep in the water that ran in that channel. There is a return in the side wall; near the angle or corner whereof we found a piece of an altar FORTUNAE SERVATRICI . . . A wall two feet two inches broad (the second instance of a pav'd foundation) of the same material as the former . . . under ye foundation thereof was found leaden pipes eight inches in circumference. The connection or drawing of which together is very remarkable . . . The wall was running South East to North West, and went within ten yards of Burwen Hall Lane. Parallel to it there was another wall of hewn stone breasted on both sides as a perpendicular wall but with six projectures like the base of the columns. They were one foot in depth and two feet square every way. Before it lay a conduit of stones, about one yard broad, and excavated in the middle, which so flowed with water that the workmen got wet."¹⁵

This is reporting of a standard such as has seldom been bettered even in our own day, and it entitles us to place Machell far above any of his contemporaries or immediate successors in the study of Roman remains. If only some of them had been able to learn from him, and follow his example of excavations and record!

So much must suffice for his unpublished notes on his own excavations at Kirkby Thore, though one day they will deserve fuller treatment, in a study of that remarkably

¹⁵ Machell MSS., vi 199-249 (from which the above extracts have been taken) are devoted to Kirkby Thore.

promising Roman site. What strikes any reader will be their careful attention to detail, appropriate for one whose scientific interests brought him election to the Royal Society. That election was no doubt prompted by the letter which Machell wrote to Sir William Dugdale on 25 March 1684, describing a Roman well that had recently been discovered at Kirkby Thore and discussing the significance of its contents. The letter was in due course printed in the *Philosophical Transactions* (xiv, no. 158, pp. 555-8), and it need not be reprinted here, but it gives a clear indication of the well's position, below the modern main road and close to the river-crossing where, more than a century later, the important collection of Romano-British metalwork came to light; and it is accompanied by sketches, one of which shows the stamp of the Lezoux potter PATERNVS, from a samian bowl the decoration of which he describes in detail, the first such stamp to be recorded anywhere in our territory.¹⁶

It is perhaps in his description of the pottery from the well that Machell reveals himself at his best (apart from an occasional element of fantasy, as when he fancies he can spot a resemblance to his family crest on the Paternus bowl). It is his eye for detail that is so remarkable; after noting the colour of the sherds and their measurements, he goes on to describe the latter bowl:—

“Another of these *Pots* is adorned with *Circles* and *Semicircles*, in one of these *Circles* is the Figure of a *Man*, sitting on a *Plinth* or square stone; in all the rest are fluttering *Genii*. In some of the *Semicircles* are *Lions* and *Goats* (or some such like *Creatures*) here one, there another; all single and current: and near the bottom, are *Stags* in Course and *Grayhounds* pursuing.”

This is quite exceptional for the period in which he lived. Yet he shared his age's weakness for fanciful imaginings and inaccurate derivations. It was here that the work of the earlier antiquaries was commonly at its weakest,

¹⁶ Machell himself read the stamp as PAULINI, but he may be pardoned for having difficulty with that particular trade-mark.

and in studying the Roman names of modern places or in copying Roman inscriptions, Machell cannot be compared except to his disadvantage with Roger Gale, or with John Horsley, the greatest of them all. But in his detailed descriptions of small objects he is unmatched; witness his account of a woman's sandal from the well:—

“Of *Spanish-like* leather and curious workmanship, being exactly stitched down round about the fore piece long $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches with a pretty *Label* of the same piece, hanging from it, for fashion sake surely; since 'tis too slender to be of any use. As small in the string as the *15h.* part of an inch. The Tongue at the end broad half an inch, long one inch; betwixt the two flourishes, which is the length of the small string, 8 parts in 10 of an inch, the two flourishes take up the rest.”

His correspondence, as far as we can judge, was not very extensive, but that was hardly necessary when two of the best known local antiquaries of the day were close neighbours of his, namely Nicolson (his old pupil) and Todd. During 1686 he exchanged letters with one John Adams, of Carlisle, who had borrowed his copy of Dugdale's *Antiquities of the County of Warwickshire* (which may serve to show that it was to be Machell's own exemplar).¹⁷ Though Dugdale was a friend of his, there does not seem to be any surviving trace of correspondence between them, except for the letter in the *Philosophical Transactions*. But several letters passed between him and Dr Mill, the principal of St Edmund's Hall, Oxford, to whom he sent a list of inscriptions “not as yet noted by Camden or anybody else”; the list also gives a general review of the Roman remains of Lower Westmorland, and it may well deserve further attention.

There is no doubt that Machell was a really efficient parish priest. Bishop Nicolson (in his *Miscellany Account of the Diocese of Carlisle*, compiled in 1703) noted that the church quire and parsonage house at Kirkby Thore were “in the Best repair of anyone in the diocese; — a good part whereof is owing to the late

¹⁷ Cf. p. 149, below.

Incumbent Mr Machell and the present Mr Wickins". He was responsible for saving the old volume of parish registers from the ravages of time, and he took care to have births, marriages and deaths entered in separate volumes (instead of mixed up together, as hitherto), and to keep a careful record of all burials as required by the Act of 30 Charles II, for "Burying in Woollens"; and the font in the parish church was "new made a good while ago by Mr. Thomas Machell the Rector at his own proper cost as a gift to the parish, and designed to have a fountain in it"; the font "was completed and finished with a fountain May 3 1688."¹⁸

He was obedient to the rubric and taught his flock without respect of persons. When Lancelot Machell's grandson, another Lancelot, was born the rector administered private baptism in the house, but would not make the sign of the cross unless it were performed publicly; the parish registers tell how the child was brought to the font in the chapel at Milburn and there was received into the congregation of Christ's flock and signed with the sign of the cross,

"as is carefully appointed by the Church of England. That the congregation may be certified of the true Form of Baptism Privately used; That Popish and all Fanatical Baptisms may be prevented or at least discovered; and that the people may not (lightly) slubber it over, as a Private Ceremony, It being indeed a public^e Sacram^t allwayes appointed to be public^ely minister'd unless upon Cases of great necessity and then the child might be brought to church; that the Minister might certify the congregation that according to the due and prescribed order of the Church at such a time & in such a Place the child was baptiz'd before many witnesses. And then it must be public^ely admitted into the Church. This rule was observed in Baptizeing this child though so much neglected by other Ministers, that the thing was thought strange. But he would not comply with his nearest Relations to administer Baptism according to custom where the Church and State had p^rscribed a rule."

There is a modern ring about this passage, as the Church

¹⁸ CWI iv 372 ff.

of England is in process of discovering again the need for baptism before the whole congregation. The register goes on record that

“The same day his mother was deny'd private churching and so came to the chapel where she p'sented her offering.”

This practice of public baptism was not a mere isolated instance; two of Machell's own children, Lancelot and Elizabeth, were baptized in the same manner. If the rector spared not his own relatives, it is hardly likely that others won for themselves the privilege of a private baptism for their child. One may take this as symptomatic of the care and diligence with which Machell conducted his ministry, at the beginning of an age which is often considered as one of absentee rectors and poverty-stricken curates.

It was unfortunate that Machell died at such an early age (he was only fifty-one), before he was ready to start writing the first-class history of Westmorland and Cumberland which he had obviously planned in considerable detail — and which his surviving papers, for all their incompleteness, enable us to judge the scope and intended character of. It would have been immeasurably more comprehensive and modern in its attention to structures and to monuments than any history that has yet been written of our two counties; and Nicolson's forecast still holds good, that such a history (and how badly one is needed!) must inevitably draw largely on Machell's MSS. collections.

It is his versatility that stands out above all. He was an archaeologist of exceptionally wide interests and precision of mind, a more than competent architect in a period when the north of England was not well supplied with architects, and an able and conscientious parish priest. But he also had in him something of the traditional antiquary (in Sir Walter Scott's sense), with his faults of fancy and his overriding interest in the history of his own family — though he more than made up for any

deficiencies in that direction by his keen eye, accurate pen, and meticulous sketching of monuments which, like many of the private evidences of ancient families, owe their preservation on paper to his assiduous care.

APPENDIX: *Machell and Daniel Fleming.*

After our paper had been completed, the Rev. C. M. L. Bouch, F.S.A., and Mr C. Roy Hudleston, F.S.A., kindly drew our attention to J. R. Magrath's *The Flemings in Oxford* i (1904), in which an interchange of letters between Machell and Daniel Fleming in 1677 is to be found. The first (*op. cit.*, 214-217) is by Machell, writing from Queen's College on 26 March:—

“Sr

I am much beholden you for the kinde proffer of your Assistance by Mr Dixon: But the Terms I like not; because I am conscios of myne owne inabilityes to perform such a work as Mr Dugdall's, haueing neither the leisure nor ingenuity of that worthy Author, who (if I mistake not) was 20 years in compileing his Booke. And If I were able to do the like; I cannot tell, whether I should meet wth such great encouragements from Westm^lland & Cumberland, as he had from Warwickshire: for the Cutts will be many, because our 2 Countyes abound wth Antiquities; and the Gentry are few. But I must confess, I am very willing to serve my Countrey as far as I can; and haue therefore enlarg'd Mr Oglebyes Queries, that I may be both able to satisfy Them, and myne own *curiosity*. The end of *which* is To haue in readiness a Local Account how things stand at this day in each Parish & Lordship; to which I may refer (as a Co^mon-Place) all those Collections I haue in readiness; and what euer else shall hereafter occur, either in Historyes or ancient Records. In Order *where-unto*, towards the conclusion of the I. Cap. (Cap. I. Qu: 8) you will finde a particular enquirie made of the Date & Number of ancient Evidences wth euery Gentleman; That (if God giue me life & leisure to do it) I may better informe my selfe by Reading of them when I come into the Countrey. But when my Collections are brought to an head, great care will be taken to select such Notes as are most material; and to purge out the rest, which are either impertinent, suspected, or dubiouse; for any one may see, by those priuate Queries which are to be made both to Lords &

Tenents, distinct, & apart, That nothing of injury is designed to any man; and That (whatsoever is exposed to my view) only such truths are like to be Recorded, as are agreed & owned on all hands.

As to the Queries. 'Tis true you will find them very long and tedious, mayny Tautologyes contained in them, & somthings also which may be litigious & not fit to be Answer'd: But tho you (the Gentlemen & Ministers of the Countrey from whom I hope the Greatest Assistance) are men of Ingenuity, so that a word might seeme to suffice; yet They are Contriv'd for Ordinary Capacityes, That the Vulgar (possibly of slow app'hensions) who must be consulted in this vndertakeing, By giueing their Answers to severall Queries in Different Terms tho to the same purpose, may luckily hit of som little Circumstance fully discovering all that is sought for in 2 or 3 Questions: And as for those which are very dubious, and therefore may seem vnfit to be Answer'd, The Respondent in this Case may vse his Discretion.

I shall be glad of your help in any thing, (for you are a Gentleman of whose Acquaintance I haue bin ambitious these many years.) But more especially I begg your Assistance in The Parish of Kendal, for which Mr Steuartson is allready Employ'd, but cannot (I fear) attend to Compleat It, by reason of his Schoole. And if any other Parishes in the Barony of Kendal should be remiss, I hope you will speake (as occasion is offer'd) to the Ministers of them.

As touching Cumberland, for which I haue an Equal Concerne (my Mothers Country!) I haue dispatch'd Papers som time agoe to my dear friend & Brother Mr Blennerhassat; w^{ch} (I make no question) he has dispersed among the Ministers: But, haueing no friends of intimate acquaintance in the Barony of Copland/Egremont, I wish'd Him to consult with you and Mr Lampleugh whose assistance I hop'd for, being encourag'd thereto by some little acquaintance contracted wth Him; and a voluntary proffer of kindness from y^{or} selfe, whom I take to haue Lands (or at least some interest) in the Barony of Copland, as your Ancestors haue had.

There is scarce a Family in Westm^lland or Cumberland, that I haue such a particular Relation of: & If such as you (Patriots of your Country!) would promote the designe vpon all occasions, as I hope you will; & encourage the Ministers by your Countenance in It, That I may But Vnderstand Its p^rsent State & late Revolutions, I should hope to leaue such collections behinde me, tho I never print, as may afford matter for after Aiges to compile a large Volume of The 2 Sister-Countyes. An Vndertakeing I

haue bin perswaded to (tho out of my way) by Mr Wood, Mr Dugdall & others; and I doubt not att all of your ready compliance, in this Publiq, Designe, wth

Y^r most humble &
most affectionate Serv^t
THO: MACHELL

Pray Remember those Queries Mr Dixon left with you, & the Coats of Arm's in Windermer Church."

A letter of 27 March, by the Rev. Thomas Dixon of Queen's College, sent by the hand of the same messenger, refers to Machell's letter (*op. cit.*, 221). Next we have Daniel Fleming's reply, written from "Rydall" on 24 April (*op. cit.*, 225 f.):

"S^r

I am much obleidged unto you for your kind Letter; & since you are pleased to communicate your designe of Describing these two Countyes, I shall be ever very ready to encourage all of myne acquaintance to assist you therein. I am very glad that we have a Gentleman, of your quality and parts, who will take the paines to illustrate the Antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland; & I think all Gentlemen theirin are obleidged to contribute (what they may) towards the compleating of such a work. I know to beautifye this your work with maps, prospects, and portraicturs, will be some what chargable: but in this I hop you will meet with Generous persons who will help you. M^r Dugdale's Warwick-shire, is a good copy to write after; and although you (perhaps) fall short heirof, yet none (considering your want of leisure) can Justly censure you for it. When you shall be next for the Contry, I shall be very glad to see you heare; that I may have som acquaintance with you, as well as I have already with your father, brother, and Vncles. What you desire from me shall be performed so soon as I can conveniently: But perceiving that you are in noe hast, & haveing som occations of my owne which will a wile take up most of my time, I hope you'll pardon the delay of

S^r

Your very loveing friend
and humble Servant
DAN: FLEMING

I have here sent you an old Deed, w^h will (in part) prove y^e great Antiquity of your Family."

Another letter from Fleming to Machell is referred to by Dixon, writing on 1 August (*op. cit.*, 226), but its text is unrecorded; however, we have Machell's reply to it, written from Queen's College on 1 August (*op. cit.*, 229 f.):—

“Sr

If all other Gentlemen were of your minde, there would be no fear of sufficient encouragem^t: But, wth som, my Queries finde cold reception; & those who are backward in their Informations, will not be too forward in their contributions. However (Sr) I haue don my Duty in dispersing these Queries, & setting a *Publiq,-designe* on foote for the Honour of my Countrey: *which*, if it goe forwards, shal haue my assistance as far as may be; but if I finde That they are not as willing to giue Information as I am to receiue It — *voluisse sat est* — I haue better Employ^t, and I hope can finde som other Divertisement. However I thanke you for your good opinion, & the Fauour you promiss in Answering my Papers; & when I com down into y^e Countrey you may be sure of a troublesom visit, from

Sr

Your most humble
and affectionate
Servant

T. MACHELL

I giue you many thanks for y^r Deed. It brought me 2 names of my old acquaintance, w^{ch} I formerly met wth in my Father's Evidences in Cartis S. D. You shal comm^d it again when you please. I would willingly know how Ridal is writ *in Cartis Antiq^s*. Wee thanke you for your P^rsent sent to the College; I put it vp yesterday in the Archives.”

The last word comes in another letter from Dixon to Fleming, written on 5 November (*op. cit.*, 231):— “I suppose you have heard that Mr Machell is upon his year of Grace, haveing gott Kirkby Thure in ye north. He is not return'd to Oxon since he was in ye North.”

We thus learn that the project had taken shape before ever Machell received the preferment to Kirkby Thore which might have enabled him to carry it through far more easily than in Oxford, if he had only been prepared to take his parochial duties more lightly; but there is a

prophetic ring in the last paragraph of his earlier letter — “I should hope to leave such collections behind me, though I never print, as may afford matter for after ages to compile a large volume of the two sister counties”: the first half, at least, has been fulfilled, and we must hope that our Society may be able to assist in the fulfilment of the second.

Magrath notes (*op. cit.*, 215, footnote 4) that a copy of Machell’s printed queries is among the Rydal papers: “They occupy four folio pages closely printed, and are headed, *That the Northern Counties which abound in Antiquities and Ancient Gentry, may no longer be bury’d in Silence Information is desir’d concerning the following Queries as they lye in order.* They are divided into three chapters. Chap. I. Queries concerning the Parish in General. Chap. II. *Concerning every particular Lordship enquire of the Lord, Steward, Balive, or experienced Tenent.* Chap. III. *Concerning Every City, Town, Village, Hamlet, &c.* In each chapter the most minute details are asked for.” Reference may also be made to Magrath’s notes for the various people and subjects mentioned in the letters here reproduced.