

V.

NOTES RESPECTING CRAIGCAFFIE CASTLE, WIGTONSHIRE. By
JOHN M'LACHLAN, Esq., ARCHITECT. (PLATE XIX.)

Craigcaffie Castle is situated about two miles from Stranraer. The road to it lies along the shore of Loch Ryan. It is situated in a hollow, separated from the loch by a rising-ground on which stands the present hamlet of Innermessan. This village of Innermessan was at one time a place of very considerable importance. Symson, in his "Description of Galloway" written in 1684, says, that it was the "greatest town there-

abouts till Stranraer was built." It has now dwindled down to a few single-storey cottages, with no remains of its ancient grandeur. It may be interesting to notice that in the immediate neighbourhood of Innermessan there is one of these earthen tumuli which occur so frequently in the rhinns of Galloway called "Moats." This at Innermessan is a very large one, about 336 feet in circumference at the base, and 78 feet high, and commands the whole basin of Loch Ryan. The castle of Craigcaffie is behind this moat in a hollow, about a quarter of a mile inland, and so completely hidden from public observation that many people living even in the neighbourhood know nothing of its existence. The site seems to have been selected to escape rather than court public observation, and this, perhaps, from the comparative feebleness of the family to whom it belonged. It is only the strong man who courts *observation*, which in perilous times means danger. The building, as may be seen from the drawing, is a remarkably perfect specimen of a small laird's house of the sixteenth century, when propriety and comfort were sacrificed to secure safety and protection from the lawless.

The building may be shortly described as three small rooms and an attic, placed one above another, with a staircase in the corner leading to the different flats. These rooms are about 17 feet long by 14 feet wide, with an additional recess opposite the staircase corner. The ground flat, which is arched, and has a drawwell in the middle of the floor, served probably as the general storehouse of the castle. The first floor would be used as the hall and general living-room, and the second floor and attics as sleeping-rooms.

The gable-walls are 4 feet thick; the side walls 3 feet. The upper floors are lighted by two windows, one on each side. These windows have the *boutel* and hollow mouldings characteristic of the Scotch architecture of the period,—the upper window on the east side having in addition in the hollow a rude species of dog-tooth ornament. At the four corners there are four open pepper-box turrets, with a sentinel's walk at the gables between the turrets, supported by bold corbelling and ornamented by gurgails of various design, a few of which are shown in the sketch.

A noticeable feature of the building is a small opening in the wall immediately above the outer door, protected by an oblique stone supported on corbels. This opening is placed as high as it possibly can be, imme-

diately under the eaves of the house, and it was no doubt used as an orifice whence might be poured at a height which would ensure considerable momentum, boiling water or other liquid on the head of any visitor who might wish access to the house contrary to the wishes of the proprietor.

On the face of the bottom crow step of the north gable are some figures wonderfully distinct, which are delineated in the sketch, and which may be taken as the date of the erection of the building. The figures are 1, 5, 7, which would seem to point to 1570 as the date of building, exactly three hundred years ago. I should be inclined, from the character of the mouldings, were it not for these figures, to have fixed for the building an earlier date.

The whole building, even to the mouldings, is in good preservation, and is at present occupied by one of the yearly-men of the adjoining farm. The stone of which it is built is freestone, and must have been brought from a considerable distance, because there is no freestone in Wigtonshire. It is of a hard gritty nature, and has preserved with great sharpness the contour of the different mouldings.

Of the family history of the Neilsons, the former proprietors of the estate and castle of Craigcaffie, nothing very definite seems to be known. The family never appears to have been one of great power or political importance. So far as one can see through the gathering oblivion and mist of two or three centuries, they seem to have been a rough, fearless, honest race of men, clinging with wonderful tenacity to their little stronghold, but wanting altogether in the art of "boosing," in that suppleness, and tact, and management which, handed down from father to son, tended in so many other families in Scotland, to swell the original peel-house and adjoining field into the baronial castle and ducal estate. This worldly astuteness seems to have been altogether wanting in these old lairds.

Their small estate, which was originally granted by Robert the Bruce to John, son of Neil, Earl of Carrick, seems to have been as large then as it ever afterwards became.

The Neilsons of the succeeding three hundred years seem to have added little or nothing to the family inheritance. None of them seem to have been men of great mark. The fullest chronological list of them I have been able to find is contained in "Paterson's Lands and their

Owners in Galloway," recently published, which may be consulted by those curious in the matter. I may note one or two points in their family history which may possess a little interest.

We find it related in Sir A. Agnew's *Sheriffs of Galloway* that in 1494 the young laird of Craigcaffie (at that time Neil Neilson), out on high jinks one night along with two or three other riotous young men of the period, drove off in high glee, for their "grait solace and divertisement," the following animals belonging to Quintene Agnew, Sheriff of Galloway:—

“ 24 kye, with their calffs, price of the piece 2 merks. .

220 sheep, price of the piece 4 shillings.

8 oxen, price of the piece 30 shillings ; and 3 horses.”

For this frolic young Neilson and his companions were tried in Edinburgh before the Lord Auditors. Their punishment was, that they should restore the “spuilzed” cattle, and pay a fine of L.40, in addition to paying 40 shillings as the expenses of the witnesses.

In 1662 we find the Neilson of that day again fined, but for a different cause. He was fined in the sum of L.1300 for his adhesion to the Presbyterian faith. Throughout their whole family history the Neilsons seem to have come in for a fair share of fines, which doubtless told in the long run on the prosperity of the family, and on the finances of their little estate, for we find that in 1688 Sir Thomas Kennedy, at one time Lord Provost of Edinburgh, had sasine of the lands and barony of Craigcaffie, no doubt on account of money lent by him.

The Lairds of Craigcaffie seem never to have got their head above water much after this. The estate and castle were transferred by them to John M'Dowall of Logan in 1759, from whom it was bought by the Earl of Stair in 1791. It has now formed part of the Stair estates for the last eighty years.

Craigcaffie Castle, although not courting danger, was well adapted to stand a siege. The walls are very thick ; there is no opening on the ground flat except the outer door, covered by the shot-hole already mentioned ; the lowest window is 12 feet from the ground ; and the draw-well in the centre of the lowest floor would ensure to the garrison a never-failing supply of water.

MONDAY, 9th May 1870.

SIR JOSEPH NOEL PATON, Kt., R.S.A., &c., in the Chair.

Before proceeding to the business of the meeting, the Secretary, John Stuart, LL.D., referred in feeling terms to the loss sustained by the Society in the death of SIR JAMES Y. SIMPSON, who had so long occupied a prominent position in the Society as a vice-president, a member of council, and one of the Society's most active members. Their departed friend, he said, was so many-sided and sympathetic that his loss would be deeply felt in many very different walks; but it fell to them more particularly to lament the blank created by his removal from among the students of archæology. It was impossible even in doing this, however, to disassociate one's thoughts from the ever-sympathetic friend who was always ready to exchange ideas on topics of historical interest; but as a member of this Society, his loss was so great that it was difficult to weigh it. The many valuable papers which he had contributed to the Society's Proceedings would be an enduring monument of his interest in its welfare, as well as of his wonderful Archæological attainments. But those only who had had reason to know the pains which he bestowed on their preparation, his sifting of authorities, his resolution to exhaust every point which could illustrate his subject, could really understand their value. The originality of his mind, conspicuous in his professional pursuits, shone equally in his archæological disquisitions, and his untiring activity of investigation, kept him open to every fresh discovery. He was the centre and bond of union of a wide circle of inquirers both at home and abroad, and it was one of his greatest pleasures to bring together, amid the hospitalities of his own house, friends who were engaged in kindred pursuits, while his manifold connexions gave him opportunities of obtaining information and kindling research which were never neglected. With all his wonderful powers and acquirements, Sir James Simpson was one of the most modest and gentle of men, and it was not saying more than the truth that his removal had deprived them of one of the most valuable and pervading influences in the promotion of archæological and historical research.

Mr Stuart then moved:—"That the Society record their deep sense

of the many and lasting benefits conferred upon it and upon the study of Archæology by the late Sir James Y. Simpson, and of the irreparable loss which his death has caused; while they lament the removal of an associate with whom personal intercourse, as one of the Vice-presidents, as a member of Council, and as an ordinary member of the Society, was a source of unvarying pleasure and instruction."

Mr Laing, Foreign Secretary, seconded the motion, remarking that it was unnecessary to say more than has been expressed by Mr Stuart, of their deep sense of regret at the removal of SIR JAMES SIMPSON in the midst of his usefulness. People sometimes wondered how he could bestow so much of his attention on Archæological pursuits; the fact was, that with him these studies were a recreation—he not only arranged occasional excursion parties during the autumn, but he never missed the chance of visiting an interesting archæological site when opportunity occurred.

It was then unanimously resolved, that, as it was understood that the funeral was to be a public one, the members of Council, at least, should attend it as representing the Society.

In proceeding to the ordinary business of the meeting, a ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were elected Fellows:—

ROBERT W. COCHRANE PATRICK, of Ladyland, Esq., B.A. Edin., LL.B. Cantab.
 GEORGE BUCHAN SIMPSON, Esq., merchant, Dundee.

The following Donations to the Museum and Library were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the Donors:—

- (1.) By the EXECUTORS of the late Professor William Stewart Traill, M.D., through the Rev. J. R. OMOND, Monzie, F.S.A. Scot.

A Collection of Egyptian Antiquities from the tombs at Thebes, comprising:—

Three small Hand-Lamps of reddish clay from Thebes, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, rudely ornamented with an incised pattern of curved lines and rows of dots, and having a cross on the handle.

Bronze Figure of the Infant Bacchus (?) or Osiris (?), with crest, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height.

Two Symbolic Eyes of Horus. Three Emblems of Deities. One Brick Cone with impression of seal.

Ten small Mummy Figures in earthenware and other materials.

Braid of Hair from a tomb. Hawk-like figure in wood, emblem of Horus. Two Crocodile Mummies, young.

Two Circular Baskets, from tombs. A Portion of a Mummy Cloth.

A Pair of Shoes from the feet of a Mummy, and portions of shoes.

Flat Two-handled Vase of clay, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

A Collection of Antiquities from Orkney, comprising:—

Iron Pin, 7 inches in length, with gold gilt head, found in 1834, with the skeleton of a young female, under a marble slab in the cathedral of Kirkwall, supposed to mark the grave of the Maid of Norway.

Two rude Bone Pins, $4\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, from a tumulus at Skail. Also a curiously shaped Bone Pin, measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, found in the island of Sanday. (See the annexed woodcut.)



Bone Pin found in the Island of Sanday. ($3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.)

Two Spinning Whorls of stone, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter, from tumuli in Orkney. Hemispherical object or Whorl (?) of lead; $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter, and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, pierced with a hole in the centre $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter; found in Orkney.

Portion of Burnt Bones, &c., found in an Urn, from a tumulus in Orkney. Specimens of Ashes and Burnt Bones, from early graves in Orkney.

Portion of Iron Spear-head (?), found in a tumulus in Orkney.

Portion of a Comb of Bone and Slip of Bone, with iron rivets. The latter is ornamented with incised circles. From a tumulus in Orkney.

A Disk of polished marble, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter, and about $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of an inch

in thickness ; found in a tumulus in the island of Westray, Orkney, in which were also found pieces of armour and portions of a glass cup, with bones apparently burnt.

A Number of Rings of the Trachea of a Bird, from a tumulus in Orkney.

Curious Grotesque and Twisted Head of an Animal of coarse glazed pottery, stated to have been found in Orkney.

Circular Table-man of Bone, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter, found in the ruins of the Bishop's palace, Kirkwall, with rude figure of an animal (a rabbit ?) (See the annexed woodcut.)



Table-man of Bone, Kirkwall, Orkney. ($1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter.)

Embossed Knife Handle of silver, in two pieces, 3 inches long, found in a grave in Orkney.

Iron Boss of a Shield, measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, and the same in height, found in a grave in Orkney.

Portions of an Iron Boss of a Shield, and of a small Iron Knife ; found in a grave at Sweindrow, in the island of Rousay, Orkney.

Roughly Circular Disk of sandstone, 2 inches diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, pierced with nine holes ; found in Orkney.

Specimens of Vitrified Stones, from the vitrified fort of Dunsinnane, Perthshire.

Specimen of the Sandstone of which the broch of Mousa is built.

Specimens of Hazel-nuts from the Orkney peat.

Volcanic Dust collected in Orkney.

Small portions of Red Fresco Painted Plaster, from the wall of a Roman house in Herculaneum.

Portion of a Roman Brick from Verulam.

Wheat from a Roman station near St Albans.

Fragments of an Iron Shell, thrown by the Turks at the last siege of Athens.

(2.) By ALEXANDER FRASER, Esq., Slockvullein.

Cast of Stone, with incised axe-head sculpturings, and of Stone with incised markings, referred to in the "Notice of Remarkable Cists in a Gravel Bank near Kilmartin" (p. 378 *ante*), by Rev. R. J. Mapleton, M.A., Cor. Mem. S.A. Scot., Duntroon.

(3.) Bequest by the late PHILIP BARRINGTON AINSLIE, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., The Mount, Guildford, presented through Mrs AINSLIE.

Painting on canvas (3 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 2 inches) of a Portrait of a Man with Helmet and Breast-plate, inscribed "EFFIGIES VERA GVLLIELMI VALLECI DE ELDERSLIE." (See "Remarks on the Portraits of Sir William Wallace," by David Laing, Esq., Proc. Soc. Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 308, where this picture is described.)

(4.) By J. G. SINCLAIR COGHILL, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

A Coping Brick from the Great Wall of China, 14½ inches in length, 7 inches in breadth, and 4 inches thick.

(5.) By DAVID GRIEVE, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Dissertations by David Hume, volume in 12mo, as originally printed, with some corrections in the Author's handwriting, and a MS. note by his friend Allan Ramsay, the Painter, respecting this volume.

Portrait of a Clergyman,—a small early drawing in China ink, on the back of which is written: "By Allan Ramsay (the Poet), 1706. His first and last piece of this kind."

(6.) By the SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE.

Lapidarium Septentrionale; or, A Description of the Monuments of Roman Rule in the North of England. Published by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Folio. Newcastle, 1870.

(7.) By the TRUSTEES OF THE BLACKMORE MUSEUM.

Flint Chips: A Guide to Prehistoric Archæology, as illustrated by the collection in the Blackmore Museum, Salisbury. By Edward T. Stevens, Hon. Curator of the Blackmore Museum. London, 1870. 8vo.

(8.) By the HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. New Series. Vol. IX. Session 1868-69. 8vo.

(9.) By the SOCIÉTÉ POLYMATHIQUE DE MORBIHAN.

Bulletin de la Société Polymathique de Morbihan. Année 1869. Vannes, 1870. 8vo.

There was also exhibited—

A Circular Embossed Bronze Shield, recently found near Yetholm.

This shield, lent for exhibition by the Queen's Remembrancer, exactly resembles in character those previously found at the same place, which are described and figured in the Proceedings, Vol. V. Plate IV. page 165.

Dr J. A. Smith was indebted to Alexander Jeffrey, Esq., solicitor, Jedburgh, F.S.A. Scot., author of the well-known "History and Antiquities of Roxburghshire," for the following detailed account of the discovery of this shield:—

"The shield was found by a man while ploughing, on the 19th day of March, in a small field in Yetholm Bog, about half-a-mile north-west from town Yetholm, on the north side of the Kelso and Yetholm road. The place was formerly part of a large lake, which joined the river Beaumont close to Yetholm, but was drained about forty years ago. The shield was found about 10 inches from the surface of the ground, standing on edge, in the direction of east and west. The two circular bronze shields in the Museum of the Society were formerly discovered near the same place."

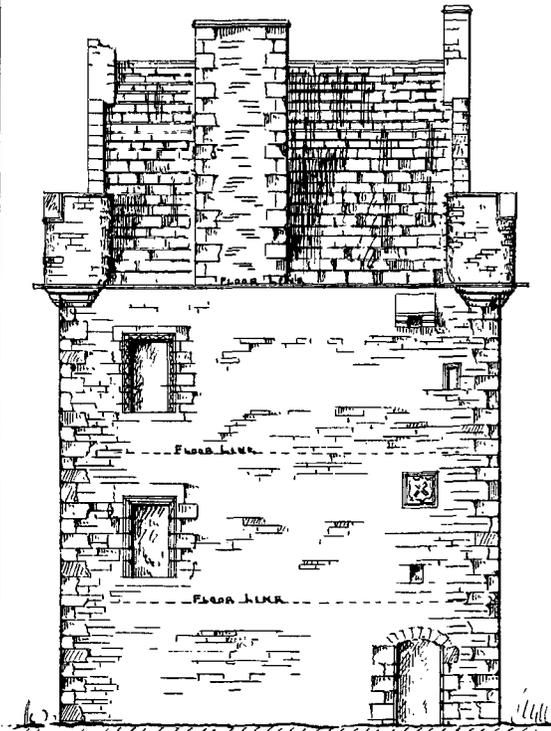
The shield is $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter; it has a plain rounded projecting boss in the centre, 2 inches in depth and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and between it and the circumference of the shield is ornamented with twenty-nine embossed concentric circles, each alternating with a row of

small rounded projecting dots or nail-head-like ornaments, closely set together. The outer edge of the bronze shield is turned over to the inside, forming a larger concentric circle than the others. The shield is very thin, and part of a small broken bronze handle remains attached to the inside of the boss, to both sides of which it had been rivetted. Two small moveable tongues of bronze are fixed on the inside of the shield, in the fourteenth concentric circle, and on the opposite sides of the central projecting boss. A pair of similar small tongues of bronze are also rivetted through the other shields found here, about half-way between the centre of the boss and the circumference of the shield. These tongues have been supposed to show the probable attachment of a leather strap by which the shield might be slung round the body; the tongues of bronze, however, fit so close to the shield that there seems little room for a strap of any kind.

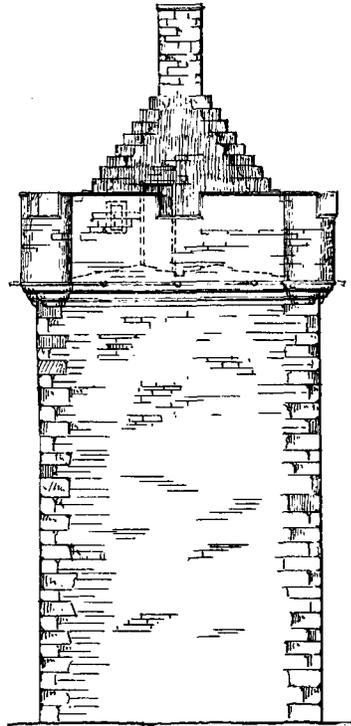
Alexander Curle, Esq., writer, Melrose, another Fellow of the Society, had also been good enough to send Dr Smith a note of its discovery.

The following communications were read :—

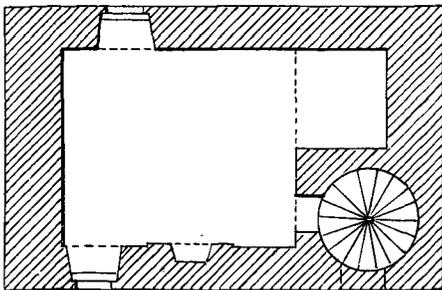
CRAIGCAFFIE CASTLE NEAR STRANRAER



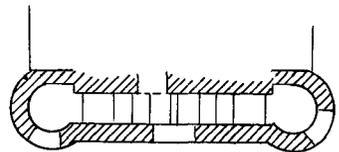
FRONT ELEVATION



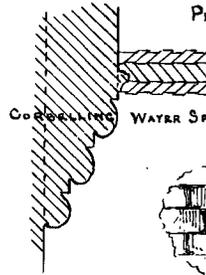
END ELEVATION



PLAN



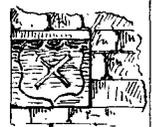
PLAN OF TURRETS



CORBELLED WATER SPOUT



WATER SPOUT



SKIEW PUTS.

