

### III.

NOTES RELATING TO DUNSINNANE HILL. BY THE REV. THOMAS BROWN, MINISTER OF COLLAGE. COMMUNICATED BY ALEXANDER LAING, Esq., F.S.A. SCOT., NEWBURGH.

Rev. Mr Brown, who was present when the excavations afterwards referred to were being made, has favoured me with the following Notes on Dunsinnane, which, relating to a site so world-renowned, are sufficiently interesting to be brought under the notice of the Society:—

“In the course of the summer of 1857, during the progress of some excavations which were being made at the time by T. M. Nairne, Esq. of Dunsinnane, a small spiral ring of exquisite workmanship was found. The form of the ring was that of a serpent; in size it was about as large as that usually worn on a woman's finger, and was made apparently of

bronze, which, however, from its age, had become so soft as to be easily scraped away with a penknife. The workmanship was most perfect, the eyes and scales on the back being carved in the most minute manner, and were of the most perfect regularity; so much so, that owing to their being so small it was only when they were looked at through a microscope that their beauty and exquisite workmanship became apparent.

“The ring was found in making a trench near the gateway of the fort, and when discovered was lying on the surface of the earth and rubbish which had been thrown up while the digging was going on, but before the workmen had left the spot for the day. Very careful search was made both at the time and afterwards, but nothing else interesting was found. The ring was given to Mr Nairne at the time, but after being in his possession for about a year was unfortunately lost.

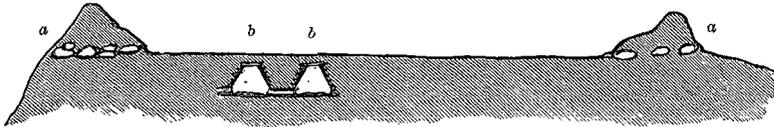
“In the course of the excavations there was, however, discovered a doorway, consisting of two rude unhewn slabs forming the posts, and a similar slab forming the lintel. From the doorway, which was low and narrow, and could not have been entered by a man in an upright position, there was a sloping passage leading to what seemed to be a house or burrow of considerable size, but underground; so that, while the house, if such it can be called, would have contained more than one, perhaps two or three persons, the doorway could only have admitted one at a time, and the passage could easily have been defended by any one armed with a spear.

“Another fact worth mentioning connected with the ruins on the top of the hill, whatever they may have been, is, that within the rampart no water has ever been found, nor has any trace of it been discovered, as indicated by the soil or the plants growing there. It is difficult to explain how the fort should have been so strongly fortified, as it evidently was, and yet have no water within its walls; as in these circumstances it would, in a very short time, have been reduced by being merely invested.”

In addition to the facts communicated by Mr Brown, I may mention that the fort on Dunsinnane is vitrified. In the autumn of the year 1867, I dug from the foundations several pieces so thoroughly vitrified that several stones of red sandstone of considerable size were firmly bound together as if by *slag* from a glass-work. One of these pieces is in the Museum.

The underground or *Eirde* house, which on investigation would probably be found to be larger than indicated by Mr Brown, the vitrification of the walls of the fort, and the spiral ring, all tend to throw back the construction of the fort to a period of great antiquity.

[An account of the Hill Fort of Dunsinnane, with notices of the excavations made by Mr Nairne, and of three skulls found in the underground chambers (which were exhibited to the Society) by T. A. Wise, M.D., F.S.A., Scot., was read before the Society in April 1855, and published in the Proceedings, vol. ii. p. 93, where the annexed section of the structure which occupies the top of Dunsinnane Hill is given.



Section of the Hill Fort of Dunsinnane.

*a a*, Earthen rampart, packed with boulders.      *b b*, Underground chambers.

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MONDAY, 8th January 1872.

THOMAS B. JOHNSTON, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

A ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were admitted Fellows :—

JAMES CASSIE, Esq., A.R.S.A.

THOMAS DICKSON, Esq., 6 Grosvenor Crescent.

PATRICK DUDGEON of CARGEN, Esq.

JOHN HENDERSON, Esq. of West Bank, Partick, Glasgow.

WILLIAM FERGUSON, of Kimmundy, Esq., F.L.S., F.G.S.

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

- (1.) By the Right Hon. the EARL OF STAIR, through CHARLES ELPHINSTONE DALRYMPLE, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Double Margined Comb of Bone, imperfect,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches across, formed of separate pieces, enclosed between two transverse slips of bone, fastened with three iron rivets, and ornamented with a central row of dots and circles, and two similar rows at the side of the cross piece, having a running scroll pattern connecting them. A zig-zag ornament forms a band across the end.

A flat Loop of Bronze,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in length.

Part of the rim of a large vessel of cast bronze, 3 inches in length.

Portion of an Armlet, of greenish glass, with a blue and white twisted cable ornament running round it.

Copper Coin, much defaced.

Copper Bodle of Charles II.

Collection of Bones of the ox, pig, sheep, &c., found with the foregoing articles during the excavation of an artificial mound on an island in Loch Inch Crindil, Galloway. (See subsequent Communication by C. E. Dalrymple, Esq.)

- (2.) By GEORGE SIM, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., *Curator of Coins.*

Armlet, probably Roman,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, formed of a bronze wire,  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch in diameter, bent upon itself in the middle, and forming two spiral turns round the wrist.

- (3.) By WALTER WALLACE, Esq., Sculptor, through MILLEN COUGH-TREY, M.B.

Three small Heads in Terra Cotta; one, a female with braided hair,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in height; another, a female with the hair dressed back, and partially covered,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch in height; the third, considerably mutilated, and having the hair encircling the head in a roll, or a headdress with a large border.

Statuette in Terra Cotta, with flowing drapery,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches high.

Head of a small Egyptian figure in stone, with conical cap, 3 inches high.

(4.) By THOMAS B. JOHNSTON, Esq.

Three War Clubs, 3 ft. 2 in., 2 ft. 6 in., and 2 ft. 8 in. in length, round, curved, and forked at the heavy end, from the South Seas.

Three long Spears, from 14 to 10 feet in length, pointed and barbed with hardwood.

(5.) By the Rev. JAMES RUSSELL, Walls, Shetland.

Sinkstone for a hand-line, recently in use among Shetland fishermen. It is an oval water-rolled pebble,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, with two grooves made round it at right angles to each other, for convenience of tying it to the hand-line.

(6.) By W. M. WYLIE, Esq., B.A., Blackwater, Hants.

Two Daggers, a Lamp, and Patella in Bronze, being specimens of spurious Antiquities recently manufactured in London, and represented to have been dug up from the bed of the Thames.

(7.) By the AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society. Vol. XI. 8vo. 1870.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. Vol. XIV. Part 1. 4to. 1870.

(8.) By the ESSEX INSTITUTE.

Bulletin of the Essex Institute for 1869. 8vo.

Historical Collections of the Essex Institute. Vol. X. 1870.

(9.) By the SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE.

Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge. Vol. XVII. 4to. 1871.

Records and Results of the Magnetic Survey of Pennsylvania. 4to. 1863.

Report of the Smithsonian Institute for the year 1869. 8vo. 1870.

(10.) By the ROYAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES, Copenhagen.

Aarboger for Nordisk Oldkindighed og Historie. 8vo. 1870.

(11.) By the UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

The Glasgow University Calendar for 1871.

(12.) By ST JOHN VINCENT DAY, Esq., C.E., the AUTHOR.

Some Evidences as to the Early Use of Iron, &c. 8vo, pp. 15. Plates.

(13.) By the MANX SOCIETY.

The Old Historians of the Isle of Man. 8vo. 1871.

The following Articles were exhibited :—

(1.) By D. CUNNINGHAM, Esq., Chapelton, Ardrossan.

An Axe-hammer of Granite,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across the rounded face, which has a bluntish edge (see Plate XXII. fig. 1). It narrows to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch at the haft-hole, which is an inch in diameter. It has been bored from both sides, and the borings have not met accurately. Round the haft-hole, on both sides, there is an ornamental band of three incised lines. The hammer end terminates in a round flat space, three fourths of an inch in diameter.

This axe-hammer was found, as stated in a letter from Mr Cunningham, on the farm of Chapelton, near Ardrossan, Ayrshire, in the spring of 1865. Mr Cunningham was having a field subsoiled, when one of the ploughs struck the upper part of an urn, and shattered it. His son, who was present, examined the contents, and found that the urn was placed with its mouth downwards, and had some calcined bones and the hammer in it. A little to the east was a smaller urn, also with calcined bones.

(2.) By J. R. BROWN, Esq., M.D., Saltcoats, Ardrossan.

Axe-hammer of Greenstone, 5 inches in length, 3 inches across the face, and having a haft-hole 1 inch in diameter. (See Plate XXII. fig. 2.) It is considerably contracted in the middle, and has an ornamental border of two parallel incised lines round each side. The rounded axe-like edge is sharper than in the previous specimen, and the hammer end presents a flattened oval, 1 inch in its longest diameter. There are two projecting

protuberances or knobs in the centre of each side, opposite the haft-hole. It was turned up by the plough in a field on the top of Montfode Braes, a little to the north of Ardrossan, and near the remains of several ancient forts.

(3.) By W. J. ARMSTRONG, Esq., Kelburne.

Bronze lion-shaped Ewer and Bronze Pot, found in a canoe, in the Loch of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire.

[For a description of these articles and the circumstances in which they were found, see subsequent Paper by R. W. Cochrane Patrick, Esq., B.A., LL.B., F.S.A. Scot.]

(4.) By KEITH-STEWART MACKENZIE of Seaforth, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Two Medallions, having engraved on the obverse a female bust, with the letters M R, and on the reverse a shield of arms.

Mr Henry Laing, to whom they have been submitted, states that the quartered coat on the one shield appears at first sight to be for the Earl of Buchan ; the first is Stewart, and the second Cuming, both of which are certainly borne by the Earl ; but the third and fourth quarters seem to have no connection with the coat of the Earl, so far as known at present. The fourth quarter is the coat of Balliol and also of Landel, which is now carried by the Earl of Home. The motto, "Judge Nought," certainly belongs to Buchan. Whatever date may be assigned to the medallions themselves, the engraved shields are certainly not earlier than the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The following Communications were read :—