

II.

NOTES ON A HERALDIC BUTTON, A PIRLIE PIG, AND A BEGGAR'S
BADGE, FROM ST ANDREWS. BY D. HAY FLEMING, LL.D.,
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HERALDIC BUTTON.

When part of the turf of the courtyard of St Andrews Castle was being relaid, on the 8th of November 1909, a flat button was found. Fortunately the keeper of the castle noticed the cinque-foil in the centre, and was struck with its resemblance to the sculpture over the gateway. The button (fig. 1), which is circular, measures fifteen-sixteenths of an inch in diameter. The back is iron and is badly corroded. The front is ivory. In the centre there is a circle three-eighths of an inch in diameter. Outside of the circle, the whole surface of the ivory has been decorated with an engraved pattern; but near the edge the pattern has been worn off, indicating that the button had been long in use, and had possibly been transferred from coat to coat. Inside the circle, a five-cusped opening has been cut out of the ivory, and in the iron thus exposed a cinque-foil has

been inserted, apparently of nicked gold wire. On the back of the button there is a hole in the centre, and in the hole there can still be detected minute particles of cloth or thread. It is not likely that these particles would have been there if the button had had a projecting ring for attaching it to the coat. There may have been a bow over the hole instead; but it rather appears that between the ivory and the iron there was a bit of cloth, of which a tag protruded.

On first seeing this button, it occurred to me that it might have belonged to Archbishop Hamilton, who rebuilt St Andrews Castle, and who was hanged at Stirling on the 7th of April 1571. Its connec-

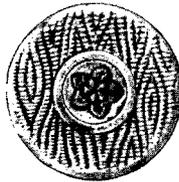


Fig. 1. Heraldic Button of Ivory.

tion with him would account for its being found in St Andrews Castle, and also for the cinque-foil. That buttons were in use in Scotland in his time is perfectly certain. In the inventory of "the clething, abilyamentis, and uthir graith, of the richt excellent and mychti prince, King James the Fyft," drawn up in 1539, there are many references to buttons of various kinds—"buttonis of the fassoun of the thrissill gold," "buttonis of gold," "buttonis of gold" each "contenand thre orient perle," "buttonis," "buttonis of sewing gold," "buttons of blak silk," "buttonis of sewing silvir," and "buttonis of silk."¹

Writing to Henry VIII. from Newcastle in 1545, the Earl of Hert-

¹ Thomson's *Collection of Inventories*, 1815, pp. 31-42.

ford mentioned that a native of Majorca had brought two letters from the King of France addressed to captains in Henry's service, "whiche letters were fynely closed and conveyed in two buttons of silke."¹ Had silk buttons been uncommon at that time, they would hardly have been selected as secret receptacles for compromising letters. In August 1575, that is barely four and a half years after Archbishop Hamilton was hanged, the General Assembly approved of certain regulations, "anent the habite of the ministers and thair wyfes." Among other vanities which they were to eschew were "buttons of silver, gold, or uther mettall."² That there were valuable buttons in St Andrews Castle before Hamilton became Archbishop is known from the declaration of John Betoun of Balfour, "sumtyme capitane" of that castle. On the 14th of August 1546, he compeared in Parliament, and, by "his grete aith," declared that, at the time of the slaughter of the Cardinal, his title-deeds, clothes, personal ornaments, the "abulzement" of his wife, of his eldest son, and of his brother-german, were in the Castle, including rings, chains, targets, "buttonis of gold," and other jewels.³

In the 1580 edition of Beza's *Icones*, Peter Martyr and Clement Marot have buttons on their clothes. In the 1602 edition of Verheiden's *Effigies*, several of the sixteenth-century men have buttons, circular, and apparently flat, resembling the St Andrews one in shape. Assuming that it belonged to a Hamilton, and to one who lived in the Castle for a period, the most likely owner was either James Lord Hamilton, third Earl of Arran, or the Archbishop. Lord Hamilton resided in the Castle both before and immediately after the Cardinal's slaughter.⁴

¹ *State Papers of Henry the Eighth*, v. 481.

² *Booke of the Universall Kirk*, i. 335.

³ *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ii. 474, 475.

⁴ Laing's *Knox*, i. 183, 184.

PIRLIE FIG.

As a pool of water gathered in the east end of the chancel of the ruined church of St Mary of the Rock, better known in St Andrews as the Culdee Chapel, a rubble drain was formed to dry the surface. It was in forming this drain that the pirlie pig (fig. 2) was found on the 1st of November 1909, just inside the church and near the priests' door. Unluckily it was broken, and all the fragments were not

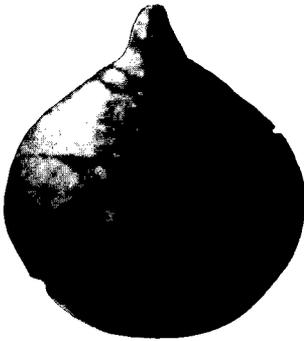


Fig. 2. Pirlie Pig found at
St Andrews. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)



Fig. 3. Pirlie Pig found in
Kirkeudbright. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

recovered. Those that were found were pieced together by Dr Anderson. Most of it is covered with a lead glaze, yellowish and green in colour. It is onion-shaped, $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches in height, and the same in diameter at the widest part. The slit is almost 2 inches long, but so narrow that a modern penny will not go through it. This pirlie pig may be assigned to the reign of James VI.

On the 8th of February 1792, in a garden of a house in North Castle Street (then known as the Castle Wynd) in St Andrews, "a small pot was turned up, which seemed to be full of earth, but, being immedi-

ately dashed in pieces, there dropped out 8 gold coins and about 150 silver ones. The gold was clean, though the colour pale. The silver pieces were covered with thick rust, and many of them perfectly friable." Among them were coins of Robert I. and James I. Within a short time many were sold; the gold ones at 12s. each, "and upwards, according to their size"; the silver ones at 1s. each. The latter were "very thin; most of them about the size of a shilling, some of them smaller."¹ The writer does not mention the material of which the "small pot" was made; but from the expression "being immediately dashed in pieces," it may be safely inferred that it was earthenware—perhaps a pirlie pig.

A pirlie pig was recently found under an old clay floor of a house in the long close opening off the High Street (opposite Broughton House) in Kirkcudbright. The extreme height of this specimen (fig. 3) is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the greatest diameter is $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches, and the breadth across the bottom, which is flat, is $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches. It has been made of red clay; and there is a dark layer, doubtless due to the firing, on the inner surface. Externally it has been coated with a brownish-yellow glaze, much of which has scaled off. The coins which it contained, or those at least which have been recovered, have been thus identified by Dr George MacDonald:—

Two testoons of Mary—one of 1553, the other of 1556; eleven placks of James IV.; fifteen placks of James V.; eighteen placks of Mary; four bawbees of James V.; thirteen bawbees of Mary; sixty-two hard-heads of Mary or Francis and Mary; two hard-heads of Mary; two small billon coins of Francis I. of France; one penny of Mary.

Another pirlie pig, now in the National Museum, was found in Perth in 1896. It is of reddish earthenware and is not glazed, and contained at least 25 gold coins. About the same time one of brown glazed earthenware was found on the site of the new Municipal Build-

¹ *Old Statistical Account*, xiii. 215, 216.

ings, Edinburgh. Both of these are figured in the *Proceedings* (xxx. 237), and the figures are here repeated (figs. 4 and 5).

In the Royal Scottish Museum there is a globular pirlie pig of red pottery, with a thick dark-brown glaze. It is 3 inches in diameter, is assigned to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was dug up in Central Street, London, in 1907. London could well spare this specimen to Edinburgh, for in the Guildhall Museum there are no fewer than fourteen, ranging from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth.¹

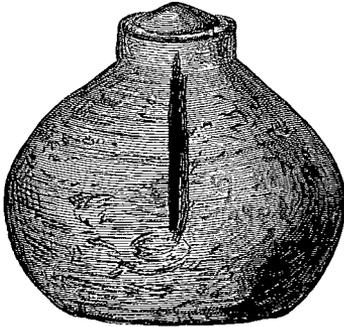


Fig. 4. Pirlie Pig found, full of Gold Coins of Sixteenth Century, at Perth. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

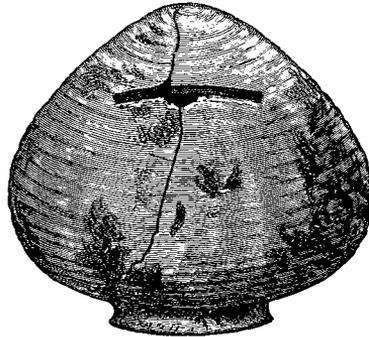


Fig. 5. Pirlie Pig found under the Municipal Buildings, Edinburgh. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

Until thirty or forty years ago there was a good demand for modern pirlie pigs. Many were modelled like a chest of drawers, others like an old man, some like "a clockin' hen." These were generally glazed brown. More artistic ones were in the form of apples and oranges, and were coloured like the natural fruit.

Jamieson gives two spellings; "pirlie pig" and "purlie pig," as current in the north of Scotland; and "pinner pig," in the west. "The same kind of money-box is used in Sweden," he says, "and called sparbossa." Dr W. A. Craigie informs me that the use of "pig," to

¹ *Catalogue of the Collection of London Antiquities*, 1903, pp. 181, 185, 188, 194, 202, 204, 224. For this reference I am indebted to my friend Mr Alexander Hutcheson.

denote an earthenware pot or jar or other vessel, is found in northern English and Scottish from about the middle of the fifteenth century ; and is even used of a cinerary urn by Bellenden and Stewart.¹ "Pirlie pig" does not appear to have been found earlier than the nineteenth century. Of "pig," as applied to pottery, Sir James Murray, in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, says "origin unknown," and compares the English "piggin," a small pail, etc. ; but it is not



Fig. 6. Beggar's Badge found near St Andrews.

impossible that it may be the same as the ordinary word "pig," and have been originally applied to drinking or other vessels made in the form of a pig. There is a "Sussex pig" of this description. Indeed, a seventeenth-century pirlie pig in the Guildhall Museum is in the form of a Sussex pig ; the glaze is reddish with yellow patches. Dr Craigie also states that the Frisian *baerch*, the ordinary word for "pig," is also applied to a pirlie pig made in the shape of the animal.

BEGGAR'S BADGE.

A few years ago (I cannot give the precise date), a beggar's badge (fig. 6) was found in a field of Balmungo, near St Andrews. It is

¹ Bellenden's *History and Chronicles of Scotland*, 1821, ii. 346 ; Stewart's *Buik of the Cronicles of Scotland*, 1858, i. 244.

oval in shape, measuring $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches by 2 inches. In the centre it bears the figure of St Andrew holding his cross in front of him. The cross is in relief, and so is the outline of the saint. Immediately over his head there is a date in Arabic numerals, apparently 1801; the last figure is a little uncertain. Above the date is the place-name "St Andrews"; and below the saint's feet the word "Parish." The letters and figures are all in relief. Two rows of small circles fill the spaces between the words "St Andrews" and "Parish." A rudely incised "6" has been cut on the dexter side. Below the word "Parish" a hole has been bored right through the badge, doubtless for a cord by which it might be attached to the beggar's coat or hung round his neck. Perhaps the beggar was blind or could not read, and did not know that he was wearing the badge upside down, though the feet of the saint were uppermost. The back of the badge is quite plain.

In the municipal archives of St Andrews there is a document indorsed "Resolution concerning Vagrants." The document itself runs thus:—

"St Andrews 20 May 1805.

"Sederunt	
"The Right Hon ^{ble} the Earl of Kellie	
Doctor Hunter	Alexander Coupar
Mr Cook	Andrew Wallace
Mr Cha ^s Dempster	George Mitchell
Robert Richard	Mr Smith
Cathcart Dempster	Doctor Adamson
Doctor Melville	John Gunn
John Wishart	George Hutton
Rob ^t Key	James Thomson
John Brown	Mr Meldrum
David Wemyss	
Andrew Walker	

"The Earl of Kellie, Præses.

"There was read, in presence of the meeting, a resolution of the Sheriff-depute of Fife and Justices of Peace of this county, conveyed at a meeting of Quarter Sessions at Cupar, the seventh day of May current, relative to preventing vagrants, sturdy beggars, and others strolling (*sic*) about the country.

"The meeting resolve that they will do every thing in their power to support the Sheriff and Justices of the county in expelling all beggars and

strollers, who cannot give a proper account of themselves, from the bounds of this parish.

“Resolve, secondly, that they will not give alms to any persons of the above description.

“Resolve, thirdly, that they will supply the begging poor of this parish with badges, and will give alms to no poor person who is not furnished with such badge.

“The Magistrates of St Andrews, being present at the meeting, they resolve and agree to give every aid and assistance in their power to enforce the regulation with respect to the classes of people before mentioned, and that they will prosecute with the utmost rigour all harbourers of vagrants within the royalty of this city.

“The meeting resolve that these resolutions shall be carried rigourously (*sic*) into effect from and after the third day of June next.

“The magistrates and gentlemen present do hereby return their thanks to the Right Hon^{ble} the Earl of Kellie for the attention he has bestowed upon this matter, and at same time request that his lordship will return their thanks to the Sheriff of the county and Preses of the Quarter Sessions, for their exertions in so necessary regulations respecting the before mentioned bussiness (*sic*).
KELLIE P.”

In the National Museum there are nearly a dozen beggars' badges, several of which were described in 1887 by Sir James Balfour Paul,¹ who drew attention to the Act of Parliament of 12th March 1424-5, which ordained that “na thiggars be thollyt to thyg nother in burgh nor to land, betwix xiiii and lxx yeris of age,” unless the council of the town or commons of the country saw that they could not win their living otherwise; and, in that case, they were to have “a certane takyn” granted by the sheriff for the landward, and by the aldermen and bailies for the burghs. Those who had “na taikynniss” were to be charged to work, under pain of burning on the cheek and banishment.²

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, xxi. 169-179.

² *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ii. 8.