

ART. IX.—*On some obscure Inscriptions in Cumberland.* By
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Communicated at Kendal, Sept. 8th, 1886.

(1). I have also the honour to exhibit a rubbing of an inscription upon an octagonal font in the parish church of Bootle, in south-west Cumberland; both the font and inscription are engraved in Hutchinson's *Cumberland*, vol. i. opp. p. 523, and on p. 559 the font is described as "a large basin, formed of black marble or porphyry of an octagonal form; on each square or face are two shields, raised from the plane, bearing characters in the Old English letter, in some parts mixed with the Saxon. The emblematical anchor in the third shield is rather singular, as it stands for the word *salvator*. The letters R. B. in the two first shields denote the benefactor who gave the font, or the stonemason who executed the work. The characters in the fourth shield we are not able to decipher." A manuscript note in a copy of Hutchinson, which belonged to the late Canon Raines, runs: "What stuff, it is the date 1453, taking in the next compartment." But the character, which Hutchinson makes into an anchor, and Canon Raine into the Arabic numeral 4, comes out most clearly in the rubbing as a bugle horn, and I am assured by the present rector of Bootle that it is a bugle horn. I am not able to offer any very satisfactory explanation of the characters in the third and fourth shields, though a friend makes them into "i. h. rec" for "rector," and takes the bugle horn to be some heraldic allusion. I cannot find any rector having these initials, nor can I identify R. B. The rest of the inscription is given by Hutchinson very inaccurately, but really reads thus:—

In | no | mine | pa | tris | et fi | lii | et sp | irit^s | s̄ac | ti A
(2).

(2). I have also the honour to exhibit a rubbing of an inscription running along the top of the plinth of a farmhouse known as Raby Cote, and situate in Cumberland, near to the melancholy remains of the once powerful Cistercian Abbey of Holme Cultram. The inscription is cut in a hollow, and, when in its original position, was meant to be read from below by a person looking up to it. It is now, by way of accommodating it to its present position turned upside down, and the stones are inserted anyhow, not following the order in which they would read. The inscription is in two pieces; that on the left-hand side of the door is 15 feet 8 inches in length; that on the right 23 feet 6 inches; or a total length of about 39 feet. The individual stones vary in length from 10 inches to 3 feet by 6 inches in breadth. Many of them are much weathered, and the piecing together of the *disjecta membra* is no easy task. I however make out the following, subject to correction:—

“Gilbert Lamotte, John de Botyll (*i.e.*, Bothel), vicar of Burg (Burgh-on-Sands).

“The year was the 6th Robert Abbot of th’ Holme, and of our lorde MDXIII. VIIIth Henry kyng.

Robert Chamber was Abbot of Holm Cultram 1507 to 1518, so that 1513 was his sixth year of office; and the inscription probably was on the top of one of the screens^s across the Abbey church, and recorded that it was given by Gilbert Lamotte, by John of Bothel, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Burgh-on-Sands, and probably by a third donor.

(3). At St. James’ church, Carlisle, is a stone, removed there from the field known as the “Seven Well Field,” below the church, on which is a much defaced inscription, given thus in Whelan’s *History of Cumberland*, p. 146.

Purgatum, dedicatum que, Ubeskud, die quinto,
Decembris, Frater, de sub rupe lapidem venerabili,
Sancto Bedæ ore rotundo.

Who

Who invented this hoax, for hoax the reading is, I have never been able to ascertain ; it is a most successful hoax, repeated time after time in print, and will, I have no doubt, survive for many a long year. I am unable at present to supply a satisfactory reading: the inscription is in five lines, but of the first line little but the bottoms of the letters remain: " Ubeskud " in the second is " Ches-cun " (Chacun), and in the next line is " paternoster."
