

II.

NOTICE OF A PASSAGE IN THE SO-CALLED DEATH-SONG OF
RAGNAR LODBROG, KING OF DENMARK. By RALPH CARR Esq.,
F.S.A. Scot.

MONDAY, 10th *January* 1870.

FRANCIS ABBOTT, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The following Gentlemen were balloted for and admitted Fellows :—

Sir WILLIAM STIRLING MAXWELL, Bart. of Keir.

THOMAS DICKSON, Esq., Curator of the Historical Department, General
Register House.

JOHN S. KELTIE, Esq., London Street.

ALEXANDER WHYTOCK, Esq., Easter Duddingston.

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

(1.) By Sir DAVID BAXTER, Bart., of Kilmaron, Fife.

The Sea Chest and Drinking Cup which belonged to ALEXANDER
SELCHRAIG or SELKIRK, of the village of Largo, Fife, the ROBINSON CRUSOE
of Defoe ; and were with him in the island of Juan Fernandez.

1. The Sea Chest which belonged to Alexander Selkirk during his
solitary residence in the Isle of Juan Fernandez. It is a substantially
made chest of teak, 3 feet in length, by about 18 inches in breadth

and the same in depth. The lid is slightly arched above, and closes with an iron tongue or hasp, which comes nearly half-way down the front of the chest, and is there secured by an iron-faced lock.

2. The cup, which is formed of a small cocoa nut, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth inside, is ornamented on the outside with a zig-zag pattern. A depressed border runs round the rim in two divisions. On the upper one is riveted a silver hoop, three-eighths of an inch in breadth, bearing the following inscription :—"THE CUP OF ALEX. SELKIRK WHILST IN JUAN FERNANDEZ, 1704-9." The cup has also a silver lining inside the bottom, and is set on a wooden stem $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, turned in imitation of the stem of a wine glass.

These relics were preserved and exhibited by the descendants of Selkirk, in the village of Largo, until they were purchased by the Donor.

A tablet, in memory of Alexander Selkirk, has recently been erected on Juan Fernandez by the officers of H.M.S. Topaze, Commander Powell. It bears the following inscription :—

IN MEMORY OF
ALEXANDER SELKIRK, MARINER,
A NATIVE OF LARGO, IN THE COUNTY OF FIFE, SCOTLAND,
WHO LIVED ON THIS ISLAND IN COMPLETE SOLITUDE FOR FOUR YEARS
AND FOUR MONTHS.
HE WAS LANDED FROM THE CINQUE PORTS GALLEY, 96 TONS, 16 GUNS,
A.D. 1704,
AND WAS TAKEN OFF IN THE DUKE PRIVATEER,
12TH FEBRUARY 1709.
HE DIED, LIEUTENANT OF H.M.S. WEYMOUTH,
A.D. 1728,
AGED 47 YEARS.
THIS TABLET IS ERECTED
NEAR 'SELKIRK'S LOOKOUT,'
BY COMMODORE POWELL AND THE OFFICERS OF H.M.S. TOPAZE,
A.D. 1868.

The following Notices of Alexander Selkirk are taken from "Willis' Current Notes" (London) for Sept. 1856; and for the use of the

woodcuts we are indebted to A. Jervise, Esq., Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot., who contributed the notices to the above mentioned publication.

The original of De Foe's Robinson Crusoe, it is now generally admitted, was Alexander Selkirk or Selchraig, a native of the parish of Largo, in Fifeshire. Several families of the same name resided at the time in the same place, and had long been settled in the fishing village of Nether Largo, romantically situated on the margin of the German Ocean. Here, about a mile distant from the parish kirk, was the spot of Alexander Selkirk's birth, in or about 1676; and although the year has not been certified by any entry in the parochial Registry of Baptisms, nor in any known record, still the house in which he was born is well authenticated, and remains in much the same primitive condition in its form as when built.



Cottage at Largo in which Alexander Selkirk was born.

Whether that branch of the Selkirks to which Alexander was more immediately related inherited their quarrelsome habits from their father or their mother, the latter of whom it appears was a person of an unsteady and discontented nature, or, as quaintly admitted in her own words, "of a troubled spirit," it would be idle to attempt to determine; yet certain it is, that the scenes of family strife which occurred within the house were the immediate cause of Selkirk leaving that home, and assuming a position in life which, by the graphic pen of De Foe, has eternised him as a hero of imperishable notoriety.

The Selkirk family appear to have been naturally turbulent, and from the Sessional records, it is clear that Alexander's elder brother John, in 1685, a married man with a family, also at times afforded the Kirk Session occasion to anathematise his dissolute conduct. During the summer of 1693, he was "rebuked" for being drunk, and striking some of his neighbours; again, in the autumn of the same

year, he, with a namesake, did penance "for being drunk in a mercat at Leven;" other instances might be adduced from the same record of the attempts to reform their ill-doing.

Alexander Selkirk's occupation is not stated, probably he followed his father's calling, that of a tanner and shoemaker; his reprehensible conduct, however, in 1695, placed him under the ban of the Kirk Session, to avoid the oppressive tyranny of which, it is recorded, he fled to sea, and hence commenced a career that at a later period earned him a never-dying name in the annals of the world. The Sessional Registers notice—

"August 25.—The quilk day, Alexander Selcraig, son to John Selcraig elder, in Neither Largo, was delated for his undecent carriage in the church. Ordered to be cited before the Session."

"August 27.—The quilk day, Alexander Selcraig called, but did not compear being gone away to the sea. This business is continued till his return."

When he returned does not appear, but he was at home in 1701, and took a prominent part in some family squabbles, which occasioned the following recorded proceedings in the Sessional Register of that year—

"Nov. 18.—John Guthrie delated John Selcraige elder, and his wife Euphan Mckie, and Alexander Selcraig, Andrew Selcraige, for disagreement together; and also John Selcraige and his wife Margaret Bell. [All ordered to appear on 25th inst.]"

"Nov. 25.—Euphan Mckie confessed that she desired to be separate from her husband, but she said she was of a troubled spirit, and that she thought her words should not be laid hold one; she said she is now in better terms with her husband.

"John Selcraige elder being enquired what was the occasion of the tumult in his house, said, he knew not, but that Andrew Selcraige having brought in a canefull of salt watter of which his brother Alexander did through mistake take a drink, and he laughing at him for it, his brother Alexander came and beat him; upon which he rüne out of the house and called his brother John. John Selcraig elder being again questioned what made him to sit one the floor with his back at the door? he said, it was to keep doun his sone Alexander who was seeking to go up to get his pistole, and being enquired, what he was to do with it? he said, he could not tell.

"Alexander Selcraige called, compeared not, because he was at Coupar: he is to be cited *pro secundo* against the next Session.

"John Selcraige younger being questioned concerning the tumult in his father's house on Nov. 7, declared that he being called by his brother Andrew came in to it, and when he entered the house, his mother went out, and he seeing his father sitting one the floor with his back at the door was much troubled and offered to help him up, and to bring him to the fire, at which time he did see his brother Alexander, in the other end of the house, casting off his coate, and coming towards him; whereupon his father did get betwixt them, but he knew not what he did otherwayes, his head being borne down by his brother Alexander, but afterwards being liberated by his wife, did make his escape.

“Margaret Bell (wife of John S.) deponed that Andrew Selcraige came running for her husband John, and desiring him to go to his father's house; which he doing, the said Margaret did follow her husband, and coming into the house, she found Alexander Selcraige gripping both his father and her husband, and she labouring to louse Alexander's hands from her husband's head and breast, her husband fled out of doors, and she followed him, and called back again—You fals loon will you murder your father and my husband both? Whereupon he followed her to the door, but whether he beat her or not, she was in so great confusion, she cannot distinctly tell, but ever since she hath a sore pain in her head.

“Nov. 29.—Alexander Selcraige, scandalous for contention and disagreeing with his brothers compeared and confest that he having taken a drink of salt watter out of the cane, his younger brother Andrew laughing at him for it, he did beat him twice with a stafe. He confest also that he had spoken very ill words concerning his brothers, and particularly he challenged his elder brother John to a combate as he called it, of dry neiffells; he said then he would not care to do it even now, which afterwards he did refuse *and regrate*; moreover, he said several other things, whereupon the Session appointed him to compear before the pulpit against to-morrow, and to be rebuked in face of the congregation for his scandalous carriage.

“Nov. 30.—Alexander Selcraige according to the Session's appointment compeared before the pulpit and made acknowledgement of his sin in disagreeing with his brothers, and was rebuked in face of the congregation for it; he promised amendment in the strenth of the Lord, and so was dismissed.”

The next that is with certainty known of Alexander Selkirk, is the fact that, while sailing master of the ship *Cinque Ports*, in 1704, he quarrelled with the captain of that vessel, and by way of punishment was put on shore on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez in the Pacific Ocean, with a chest containing clothes, a hatchet, and a firelock, with some powder and shot, and that there he contrived to live till he was picked up by Captain Woodes Rogers, in 1709, and brought to England.

The firelock, his clothes chest, and drinking cup, used on the island, were brought home by him to his native village; and with the exception of the firelock, now at Lathallan House, near Largo, the rest remain in the house in which he was born. The house, nominally at least, the property of Mrs Gillies, a poor widow, is tenanted by her; she is the daughter of John Selkirk, grand-nephew of Alexander Selkirk, is 78 years of age, and has been the mother of a large family, nine of whom have preceded her to their last home.

Widow Gillies¹ is the last survivor of the family to which Selkirk belonged, and her circumstances are such, that she is dependent on the benevolence of those who visit her interesting cottage, and the relics of her far-famed predecessor; visitors, it must be admitted, are not a few, some of them are and have been persons of high literary distinction; among them not the least memorable was the master spirit of the North, Sir Walter Scott, and his publisher Constable, the latter of whom, in

¹ Mrs Gillies died in 1862, aged 83.

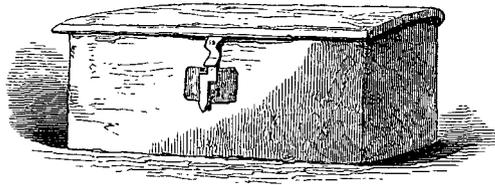
consequence of the notices recorded respecting Selkirk in the parish Registers, rebound them handsomely at his own cost; the upper side of each volume being inscribed—*Rebound for preservation at the expense of Archibald Constable of Balneil, 1820.*

The drinking cup, formed of a small cocoa-nut shell, presents a simple ornament scratched with a knife with Selkirk's own hand, is three inches and a quarter deep, by two and a half inches diameter. Mrs Gillies assured the writer, it had formerly a silver foot and stem, but that her father had disposed of it. Wanting that appendage, Sir Walter and Constable took it to Edinburgh, where the present foot and stem of rosewood, nearly three inches high, was added, making the whole about six inches in height. They also added the silver band or fillet that encircles the outside of the cup, bearing this inscription—*The Cup of Alex. Selkirk, whilst in Juan Fernandez, 1704-9.*



Drinking-Cup of Alexander Selkirk.

The clothes-chest, designated by the family in Mrs Gillies' youth, "the cedar kist," from the top being made of cedar wood, is two feet deep, eighteen inches



Sea-Chest of Alexander Selkirk.

wide, and three feet long. At one end is a small drawer or 'locker,' with a rudely ornamented lid. The hasp of the lock was a coarse strong sort of fastening, now useless. Upon the top of the slightly rounded lid are the letters A. S., and the figures 34, being the number of the chest on board Capt. Woodes Rogers' ship at the time he was homeward bound; there are also scratched, with some sharp instrument, four angular marks equi-distant. The contents of the chest, as may be premised, are few—the drinking cup, a copy of De Foe's novel of 'Robinson Crusoe,' and the rusted key, long since past use, are all it contains."

On the motion of Mr Laing, a special vote of thanks was awarded to Sir David Baxter. He stated that these articles had been sent last autumn for sale to Mr Chapman, of Hanover Street, Edinburgh. The price expected far exceeding the funds at the Society's disposal for such purposes, Sir David Baxter, hearing accidentally of the intended sale, said that if Mr Laing considered it would be a suitable donation to the Society, he would willingly purchase and present them. After examination and a favourable report being made as to the genuineness, and the interest attached to such relics, Sir David Baxter, with his usual liberality, presented them to the Society's Museum.

(3.) By LAWSON TAIT, Esq., Surgeon, Wakefield, Cor. Mem. S.A. Scot.

Celt of Greenstone, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, of tapering rounded form, 3 inches across the cutting face, which is partially polished, the rest being roughly smoothed to an even surface. It is chipped at both ends, as if by use.

Stone Cup, with a knob or short handle, ornamented round the lip with short scratched lines obliquely crossing a line running nearly parallel to the rim, and about a quarter of an inch below it. It measures 4 inches in its greatest diameter, and nearly 2 inches in height. The cavity is circular, about 3 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in depth. The handle, which is flattened on the upper and under sides, is constricted by a deep groove cut round it, where it joins the bowl, and a hole has been begun to be drilled through it from the upper side.

(4.) By ROBERT GARLAND, Esq., Cowhythe.

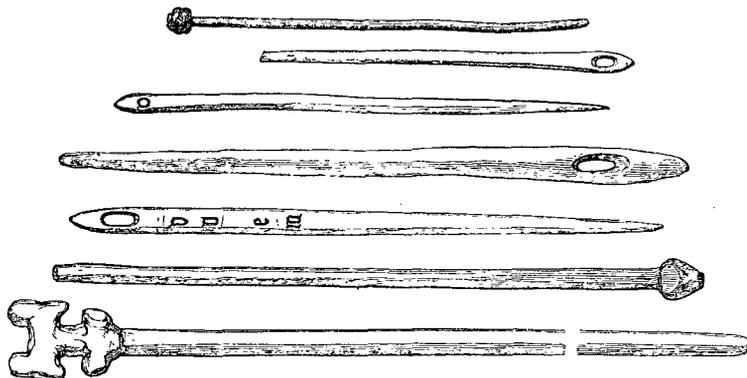
Collection of Manufactured Objects and Animal Remains from a kitchen midden at Craig of Boyne, parish of Boyndie, Banffshire.

The kitchen-midden from which these relics were obtained appears to be of the historical period. It is situated on a shelf of the rock on the side of the Craig of Boyne, on which stood an ancient castle.

The animal remains consist of the bones of the small Highland sheep, the ox, the pig, the dog, a domestic fowl with largely developed spurs, and several species of fish, including probably the wolf-fish. The long

bones of the larger animals are all broken and splintered, and some of the splinters partially shaped into pins or needles.

The manufactured objects consist of pins and needles of bone; pins of brass wire, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, and headed with a spiral twist of smaller wire (see upper figure of woodcut); partially formed bone pins; and a piece of window (?) glass, showing a fine iridescence from decay. The bone pins are two in number, both imperfect; one has a well-cut head, of a rather archaic-looking pattern (see woodcut). Of the bone needles there are five, ranging from $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. The shortest



Brass Pin and Bone Needles and Pins, from Kitchen Midden, Craig of Boyne.

are not thicker than an ordinary darning needle, and have a well-pierced eye of oblong shape. One, formed of hard white bone or ivory, is rather more than 3 inches in length, and is remarkable from having the letters **Do em** neatly cut into it, as shown in the accompanying woodcut. The form of the letters is that of the fourteenth century.

(See subsequent Communication by Mr Garland.)

(5.) By Mr GEORGE M'WILLIE, Ardgethnie Cottage, Botriphnie, through A. JERVISE, Esq., Cor. Mem. S.A. Scot.

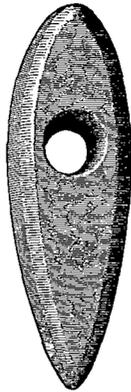
A Stone Cup, of oblong form, flat bottomed, measuring $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in

length, by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth, and half an inch in depth. It is of steatite, and has part of a broken handle, which is constricted by a deep groove running round it at its junction with the bowl.

- (6.) By MR DAVID BENNET, Salmon-fisher, Abernethy, through
ALEXR. LAING, Esq., Newburgh, F.S.A. Scot.

A perforated wedge-shaped Stone Hammer, found in the Tay, near Mugdrum Island. The hammer, which is of a dark coloured, close-grained, and very hard stone, is finely made and well polished. It is $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, by 2 inches wide, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. The perforation for the handle, which is 2 inches from the one end and 3 inches from the other, is an inch in diameter, and has been bored from both sides, being narrowest in the middle.

Stone Hammer found in the Tay, near
Newburgh ($6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length).



- (7.) By MR JOHN T. ROSE, 8 Oxford Street.

A Chinese Sword and three Malay Creases.

- (8.) By the ROYAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES.

Mémoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord. Copenhagen, 1868. 8vo.

Tillaeg til Aarboger for Nordisk Oldkindighed og Historie. Aargang, 1868. Parts III. and IV. Copenhagen, 1869. 8vo.

- (9.) By GEORGE FINLAY, Esq. (the Author).

Παρατηρησεις επι της Εν Ελβετια και Ελλαδι Προϊστορικης Αρχαιολογιας.
Υπο Γεωργιου Φινλαι. Εν Αθηναις. Τυποις Λακωνιας, 1869.

(10.) By ALEXANDRE MAGNO DE CASTILHO (the Author).

Études Historico-Géographiques. Monuments Commemoratifs des Découverts Portugaises en Afrique. Par A. M. de Castilho. Lisbon, 1869. 8vo.

(11.) By the ROYAL GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND.

Journal of the Royal Geological Society of Ireland. Vol. II. Part I. Dublin. 8vo.

(12.) By the BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF ROME.

Report of Proceedings of the British Archæological Society of Rome, 1868-69. 8vo, pp. 16.

Treasurer's Report. Roman Fund for Archæological Investigations and Excavations. 1869. 8vo, pp. 16.

(13.) By ROBERT DAY, Esq., jun., F.S.A. (the Author).

Description of a Bronze Figure, said to have been found at Clonmacnoise, Ireland. 1869. 8vo, pp. 4, plates.

The following Communications were read :—