

cracks of the whip in the porch, these may probably have referred to the denials of St. Peter, to whom, with St. Paul, the church is dedicated; and it may be observed that, as those denials occurred out of the Sanhedrim or council, this may have been signified by the porch being chosen for the performance of this part of the ceremony. I see nothing in the First Lesson of the day to which it could possibly allude, nor in the Lesson of the ancient ritual for the benediction of the palms (Exodus, xv., 27, and xvi., 1—7), according to the Roman Missal. It is hard to conjecture at what part of the ancient office for Palm Sunday this commencement of the ceremony could have taken place.

Upon the whole, my conviction is, that very great changes were made from time to time in the mode of rendering the service by which the Broughton estate was held, until it had little in common with the original, and as these ought to have been matters of arrangement between the lord and the tenant, if the documents relating to the Manor of Hundon extend sufficiently far back, it is very likely something might be found in them respecting the alterations which took place at the Reformation, and also in 1662, when the Book of Common Prayer was last revised.

Every one must approve of the discontinuance of this singular interruption of Divine service; but it may not be without interest to the members of the Institute to have so curious a remnant of ancient usage brought before them; and, as one obscure matter often throws light on another, when they are brought into comparison, so this may happen presently to illustrate, or to be explained by some dark passage, with which it has not yet been compared.

W. S. W.

NOTICES OF A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY OF SILVER ORNAMENTS IN A TUMULUS AT LARGO, IN FIFESHIRE.

COMMUNICATED BY ROBERT DUNDAS, ESQ., OF ARNISTON.

IN a former Memoir on Ancient Personal Ornaments found in the British Islands, the readers of the Journal have been made acquainted with an interesting discovery of gold armillæ, found on the shore of Fifeshire, in 1848, and laid before the

Institute by Mr. Dundas.¹ We have now to relate, by the kindness of that gentleman, another very curious discovery, made some years since upon the estates of the late General Durham, in the same county. Our best thanks are also due to Mrs. Durham, of Largo House, with whose obliging assent the valuable antiquities, forming the subject of the present Notices, have been entrusted to us for exhibition; and the accompanying representations have been prepared by Mr. Shaw for the gratification of our readers.

The village of Largo, situated on a bay on the northern shores of the Firth of Forth, was, doubtless, on account of its sheltered position and good anchorage, at all times a frequented and important haven. The bracelets above mentioned, were found on the sandy shore of this harbour, at or near a spot marked by tradition as a site where treasure had previously been brought to light. The singular discovery of silver ornaments or armour, the particulars of which have been very kindly communicated by Mr. Dundas, was made about three miles from the coast, on the estate of Largo, northward of the Bay. The precise facts connected with the discovery have not been ascertained: the precious deposit lay in a tumulus, known by the name of "Norrie's Law;" the person by whom this valuable hoard was disinterred is still living, and in good circumstances; he resides at Pitlessie, in Fife, but, as too frequently occurs in cases of treasure trove, the circumstantial details are lost in impenetrable mystery.²

The supposition that the remarkable collection of silver relics discovered at Norrie's Law, were, in fact, parts of *warlike* equipment, a notion suggested, possibly, by some local tradition regarding a chieftain there interred,³ appears to have been received on the authority of Mr. Robertson, a silversmith in the neighbouring town of Cupar, who was the chief purchaser of the precious metal.

It is greatly to be regretted that the circumstances under which the discovery occurred, render it impracticable to obtain a circumstantial and scientific account. Twenty years had elapsed after the opening of the tumulus, when the atten-

¹ See p. 53, in this volume of the Journal.

² It is singular that even the year in which the find took place, does not appear to be positively ascertained. Mr. Buist states that it occurred "about 1819;"

but, in Mr. Chalmers' *Monuments of Angus*, the year 1817 is named as the time of the discovery.

³ See the account of such a tradition, stated to have subsisted in the neighbourhood, given at the close of that Memoir.

tion of Mr. Buist, of Cupar, who had been engaged in investigating the sculptured monuments, or cross-stones, of Scotland, was directed to the subject, and a Memoir was compiled by him, with the purpose of making so curious a discovery known to antiquarians, and eliciting further information. We are indebted to his Report, of which a copy has been obligingly supplied by Mr. Dundas, for the following interesting particulars :—

“ The fragments of the Norrie’s Law Armour, now in the possession of General Durham, consist of two circles or armlets, rather rudely formed, and in indifferent preservation—of two bodkins of the most exquisite workmanship—of two lozenge-shaped plates, marked with the symbols of the cross-stones—a beautiful finger-ring, in the form of a coiled serpent—a small sword hook—the mouth-piece and tip of a very large sword-scabbard—an ornamented circular plate—and various other lesser fragments, whose uses have not been precisely determined. They contain twenty-four ounces troy of fine silver. They appear to have been found about the year 1819, in or near a stone coffin in an artificial heap or tumulus of sand or gravel, called Norrie’s Law, on the boundaries betwixt the estates of Teasses and Largo. They formed part of a rich coat of scale armour, the pieces of which consisted of small-sized lozenge-shaped plates of silver, suspended loosely by a hook from the upper corner. The helmet and shield and sword-hilt were, when found, quite entire, as were some portions of the sword-sheath. This seems to have been a large cross-hilted weapon, such as were commonly used with both hands. No parts or relics of the blade were discernible. No bones, ashes, or human remains, appear to have been found near. The pieces of armour were withdrawn, piecemeal, and sold by a hawk for what they would bring, and to whomsoever chose to purchase them. The uses of the plates are unknown, as also the meanings of the symbols so emphatically engraved on them. The circles resemble certain mysterious gold ornaments found in many parts of Ireland, and which have so entirely perplexed the most minutely profound Irish antiquarians.⁴ It cannot, however, be pronounced that the similitude amounts to any distinct measure of identification, though it is not to be overlooked, when we keep in view that the symbols of the plates are identical with those of the stone crosses, that these, again, are peculiar to Ireland and Scotland, in both of which countries they abound.—A considerable number of coins, now wholly lost sight of, and said to have borne these symbolic markings, were found along with the armour of Norrie’s Law, and about forty of the same kind were found in an earthen pot at Pittenweem, in 1822. It is said that these were destitute of inscription or written character. A considerable part of the armour was partially corroded, the alloy having been eaten away as if by some weak acid, exactly after the manner of that employed in certain operations of modern silversmiths. The bullion in this case was much more pure than in those cases where it remained solid and untouched. It was, in fact, reduced to the state of porous, brittle, spongy silver. The parts affected in this way were those lowest down, which seemed to have suffered from very long exposure to some subtle corrosive. The

⁴ We are not aware that the peculiar Z-shaped ornament has been noticed on any ornament or sculpture found in Ireland. The gold ornaments to which Mr. Buist alludes, are possibly the crescent-shaped plates often found in Ireland, which bear resemblance to certain symbols sometimes found in connection with the Z-shaped symbols upon cross-stones in Scotland, as at Glamis and Crosstown, Forfarshire ; Elgin, Muir of Rhyndie,

Aberdeenshire, &c. Circular gold plates have also been found in Ireland, bearing the symbol of the cross, such as are represented in Camden’s *Britannia*, edit. by Bp. Gibson, in the *Account of Co. Donegal* ; in Ware’s *Antiqu. of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 126 ; and *Dublin Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 244. These, however, do not appear analogous to the “circles” in question.—A. W.

upper portions were fresh, compact, and entire. In them the silver was nearly the same as our present standard.

"These are nearly all the facts which have as yet been obtained from trustworthy sources respecting the Norrie's Law Armour."—Mr. Buist, in the Preface to his Report, adds the following statement:—"For the information in regard to the lost portion of the Norrie's Law Armour, I have been indebted to Mr. R. Robertson, jeweller, Cupar, or to individuals to whom I have been by him referred. Mr. Robertson first made a purchase of 5*l.* worth, subsequently two of 10*l.*, and knew of another made by some one about Edinburgh to the amount of about 20*l.*; and is under the belief that perhaps as much as that may have been carried away and bestowed on various uses. This, by rough computation, may, together with what remains, be reckoned not much under four hundred ounces of pure bullion. Mr. Robertson has, as may readily be supposed, a peculiarly distinct recollection of the forms of the various portions of the armour procured by him, and gives a most vivid description, in particular, of the rich carving of the shield, the helmet, and the sword handle, which were brought to him crushed in pieces to permit convenient transport and concealment."⁵

The Report, to which we are indebted for the foregoing information, is illustrated by lithographic drawings which represent the supposed armlets, bodkin, oval plates, and the spiral ring: with these is also given a sketch of the shield and sword-hilt, drawn, as it is believed, from Mr. Robertson's description. On the former, of which the dimensions are given, 16 in. by 10 in., appears a figure of a mounted warrior, his right hand resting on his sword, the point of which is supported by his foot. The shield has the upper edge shaped with two curves, meeting in a central apex, resembling the debased form of scutcheon prevalent only in the last century. The sword-hilt appears equally conjectural; both appear to be drawn conformably to the notion which a vague description of a shield and a sword would suggest, and deserve notice only in default of all other evidence. The other lithographs represent twelve of the curious sculptured crosses in North Britain, on which the mystic symbols appear, and a cross at Largo, of the same period, exhibiting various animals, mounted hunters, and interlaced ornaments. It was found many years since, broken into several fragments; and having been reunited, was securely placed by General Durham in the grounds at Largo.

In the magnificent volume recently published by Mr. Patrick Chalmers, accurate representations of the principal objects found in Norrie's Law have been given, of the original size.

⁵ "Report by Mr. George Buist on the silver fragments in the possession of General Durham, at Largo, commonly called the Silver Armour of Norrie's Law. To the Fifeshire Literary and Antiquarian Society." Dated, Cupar Museum, Nov. 1, 1839. Printed in

the Fifeshire Journal Office, 1839, pp. 4, 4to, with three lithographic plates, representing the principal silver relics, various cross-stones in Scotland on which the mystical Z-symbol is sculptured, and two views of the cross at Largo.

As this costly work, presented to the Bannatyne Club, is in very limited circulation, and will not be generally accessible, it has seemed desirable to give representations in this Journal, by which the attention of archaeologists may be drawn to the singular character of these remains, which we now proceed to describe.

1. The two ornaments designated by Mr. Buist as "circles or armlets," appear to be portions of the large ring-fibulæ, of common occurrence in Ireland, the *acus* being in both instances lost. There can scarcely, however, be a question, when we compare with this the numerous Irish brooches of this type, some of them having the *acus* of very extravagant length, some enriched with the most elaborate ornament, that these also are fibulæ. One measures $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. in diameter, and is nearly circular; the other had lost a part of the hoop, and been clumsily repaired, so that the diameter measures, in one direction, only 5 in., in the other $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. The flat part, where the hoop is disunited to admit of the *acus* passing through, measures in breadth $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. Compare the beautiful ring-brooches represented in Walker's *Dress of the Irish*, p. 15; Dublin Penny Journal, vol. iv., p. 45; Vallancey's *Collect. Hib.*, vol. vii., and the splendid examples given by Mr. Fairholt in his interesting *Memoir on Irish Fibulæ*, published in the *Transactions of the Archaeological Association at Gloucester*, p. 89. It may deserve observation, that none of these have the hoop twisted, as in the examples under consideration, but they are ornamented occasionally in a manner which would appear, like the deep spiral groove, ill suited to the free movement of the *acus*. A ring-fibula, with singular twisted hoop, however, but the ends not dilated, found in Livonia, is given in the *Annals of the Antiquaries of the North*, 1836. Mr. Fairholt seems to regard this type of fibula as exclusively Irish; fibulæ of analogous form have been found in England, such as the specimens from Westmoreland, figured in a previous page of this volume, where a notice of another English example will be found.⁶ A single English fibula of the type, with dilated ends, resembling those from Largo, is figured by Pennant. It is a fragment, found in a pond in Brayton Park, Cumberland, of silver; diam. 4 in., and much ornamented; the *acus* lost. A large silver hook, weight 2 oz., was found with it.⁷

⁶ See p. 70, of this volume.

⁷ Pennant's *Scotland*, vol. ii., p. 44.

SILVER ORNAMENTS FOUND AT LARGO.



Fig. 1. Portion of a Fibula
(Half the original size.)

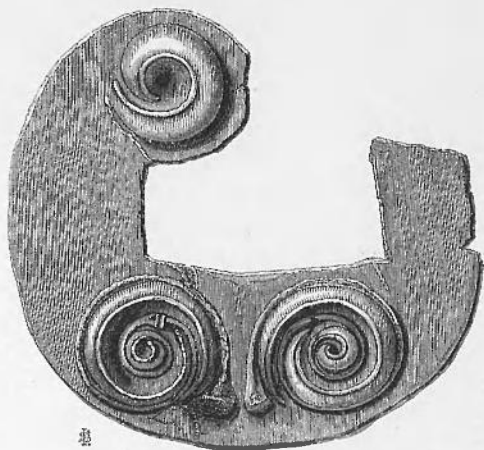


Fig. 2 Plate with Scrolls in relief.
(Half the original size.)

SILVER ORNAMENTS FOUND AT LARGO.



Fig. 3. Scale-like Plate
(Original size.)

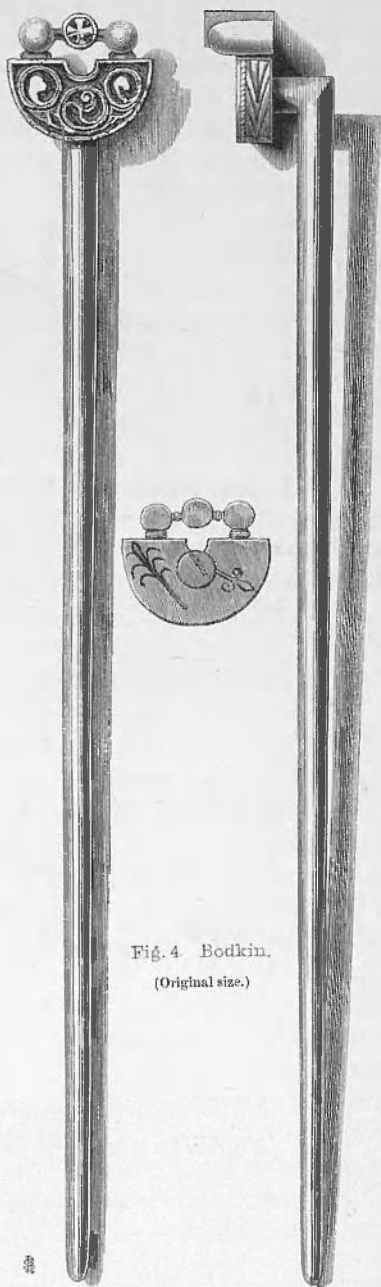


Fig. 4. Bodkin.
(Original size.)

2. A plate of silver, enriched with singular scrolls, or foliated ornaments, in very high relief: three of these remain; there was obviously a fourth, connected with the corresponding scroll by a narrow neck, the plate being formed with an irregular oblong opening in the centre. Dimensions of the plate $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 4 in.; length of the opening $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.; projection of the ornaments more than $\frac{1}{2}$ in. They appear to have been cast, and are formed with great elegance of outline and skilful workmanship. This, probably, is the fragment which had been considered the "mouth-piece of a very large sword-scabbard," as described by Mr. Buist. It may bear some similarity to the plate serving as a guard, on swords of the seventeenth century, but has no parallel in weapons of earlier date, and it may safely be affirmed that it was not destined for such a purpose. There would appear to be a certain analogy in the ornamentation of this curious relic, with the designs on the bronze antiquities found at Polden Hill, and those from Stanwick, now deposited by the Duke of Northumberland in the British Museum. The peculiar element of ornament seems, however, indubitably to be found in decorative bordures of MSS. of the seventh and eighth century, designated as of the Irish-Saxon School; and it may be traced in the "double-spiral" ornament of the Northern Antiquaries. No precise parallel, however, to the type here exhibited, has hitherto been noticed. (See Woodcut, fig. 2.)

3. Two plates described as lozenge-shaped, but the form seems rather to resemble a leaf: they are precisely similar, with the exception only that on one the marginal line has been burnished out: it is still perceptible. Weight, 598 gr. and 517 gr. respectively. They exhibit the mystic symbol, found on sculptured crosses in Scotland, and as it is believed in that country alone. The annexed representation (fig. 3.) of the same size as the original, renders description of this device needless: it is deeply engraved, and the cavities were, very probably, enamelled. It is seen on various cross-stones represented in the works of Gordon, Pennant, and Cordiner, but correctly shown only in the beautiful volume produced by Mr. Chalmers. In these sculptures the Z-shaped symbol sometimes occurs with a serpent twined round it in place of the circles;^a the extremities are usually branched, and one

^a See sculptures at St. Vigean's: Chalmers, pl. III., Meigle, pl. VII., and Ballutheron, pl. VIII.

of them often, as here, is fleur-de-lysé : the head of an animal is often annexed, as in these examples ; sometimes it is rudely figured by scroll foliations, forming a similar outline. Near to it are represented a mirror, sometimes with two handles or rings, (?) a crescent, possibly the gold lunular ornament, frequent in Ireland, and a comb : the crescent sometimes traversed by a V-shaped symbol, one extremity branched, the other similar to a fleur-de-lys : the *triquetra*, a fish, animals and horsemen are also introduced. But for a precise notion of these mysterious devices we must refer our readers to Mr. Chalmers' beautiful plates.

Objects of metal, exhibiting the peculiar spiral ornaments of this character, are of excessive rarity in England. Almost the only well-marked examples exist in the Museum of the Warwickshire Natural History and Archaeological Society ; they were found at Chesterton, in that county, and may be assigned to the seventh century. It is interesting to observe that while one pair of roundels there preserved, exhibit almost precisely the type of ornament shown on the silver plates from Largo, (fig. 3.) as may be seen by the wood-cut given with the Notes on the Art of Enamelling, in a former volume of the Journal ;⁹ a second pair ornamented with a cross, present a close resemblance to other roundels combined with the Z on sculptured crosses in North Britain.¹ This last Warwickshire example is figured in the Journal of the Archaeological Association (vol. iii., p. 282). Two other objects, of similar ornamentation, found in a tumulus in Derbyshire, may be seen figured in the Archaeologia (vol. ix., p. 190). In Ireland, and especially in the Museums of the Royal Irish Academy, works in metal, and enriched with enamel (the *Opus Hibernicum* ?) characterised by similar ornament, are to be found in greater variety.

In regard to the intention of these singular plates, no probable conjecture has hitherto been proposed. Mr. Buist speaks of "scale-armour, the pieces of which consisted of small-sized bronze-shaped plates of silver, suspended loosely by a hook from the upper corner." If these be the plates in question, it is obvious that they were not destined for such a purpose, the small spirally engraved boss at the "upper corner" being, in both the plates received from Mr. Dundas,

⁹ Vol. ii., p. 162.

¹ Compare especially Fordown, pl. xiv. in Mr. Chalmers' work.

without any *perforation*; the reverse of the stud, or boss, is hollow, but no apparent means of suspension or attachment can be discerned, as would naturally be expected at first sight. The reverse of the plates is quite plain, and slightly convex. May they not have been destined for some mystic or magical purpose?

4. A pair of bodkins, used probably for fastening the dress, measuring in length rather more than $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. They are precisely similar, except that on the reverse of the head of one of them is engraved the mystic Z symbol. (See wood-cuts, fig. 4, orig. size.) The head is beautifully chased, apparently for enamel, the ornament being spirals of the type prevalent in the MSS. before-mentioned. The head is of very singular fashion, hitherto found, as I believe, in Ireland alone. It consists of a semicircular button, surmounted by three projecting studs, the central one bearing a Greek cross *patée*. A similar pin, of bronze, and rudely fashioned, occurs amongst the antiquities from the tumulus at Lagore, Co. Meath, described in this Journal, by Mr. Talbot.² Another, of silver, similar in the peculiar fashion of the triple head, is figured in Walker's "Dress of the Irish," pl. II. The ancient Sumptuary Laws, given by Gen. Vallancey, prescribe the lawful value of the silver bodkins, of various classes; that of the king or bard being fixed at 30 heifers.³

5. A fragment of a diminutive pin of similar fashion, length, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch; the central stud appears to have been set with a gem.

6. A disc, of stout plate, measuring in diameter 3 inches, with a central boss. At the upper edge are two holes, possibly for the purpose of attaching it to the dress. A smaller disc, like a button, diameter, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the centre, formed with a deep casement, as if intended to be set with a gem, or other ornament. There is no apparent means of attachment as in the former.



Half size of Original. 430 grs.

7. Two fragments of armillæ, beaten out so that the inner side is hollow, the outer face convex. Width, three quarters

² See p. 105 of this volume.

³ Collect. de Reb. Hib., No. IV. The Irish ornaments of this kind are exceedingly curious. See specimens in Dublin Penny Journal, vol. iv., pp. 45, 56.

of an inch. The extremities are hammered out flat, and rounded. They are devoid of ornament.

8. A fragment of fine interlaced chain, of silver, bearing resemblance in workmanship to the portions of chain found with Saxon coins and remains in Cuerdale. (See *Archæol. Journ.*, vol. iii.)

9. A spiral silver ring, measuring nearly seven-eighths of an inch in diameter, and weighing 120 grains. It had apparently been shaped by the hammer, the outer side slightly rounded and much worn in parts, the edges serrated, as shown in the annexed representation: these denticulations were not continued along the entire thread of the spiral; they were cut on the *inner* edge only of each extremity, extending nearly half an inch in length, a portion (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch) was left plain,



Spiral silver ring found at
Largo.
(Weight, 120 grains.)

whilst the central part of the thread was serrated on *both* edges. Several examples of the spiral ring may be cited, discovered in Britain: the intention was to permit their being worn on a finger of any size. Compare one found with Saxon remains in Kent (Douglas's *Nenia*, pl. xv., p. 64); and another found on the finger bone in a tomb in the Isle of Wight, (*Transactions of Archæological Assoc.*, Winchester, p. 152).⁴

10. A double hook, in form of an **S**, described by Mr. Buist as a "sword-hook." Length, 1 inch.

11. Numerous fragments of thin plate, possibly the remains of the coating of a shield. On some marginal portions appears a border of oblong projections, hammered up, possibly to represent nail heads. Width of the border three-quarters of an inch, each boss three-eighths of an inch broad. The plate, when entire, appears to have been round, resembling possibly the bronze plating of ancient British bucklers: the curve of one portion suffices to show that the circle measured 21 or 22 inches in diameter, which is only 3 or 4 inches less than the ordinary dimensions of the tarian. It deserves notice that the embossed ornament, although more rudely wrought, bears much resemblance to that of the gold corslet found at Mold.⁵

12. A narrow band, like a riband, of silver, very thin,

⁴ See also spiral rings found in the North of Europe: Wagener, figs. 10, 442, 1087.

⁵ *Archæologia*, vol. xxvi., p. 425.

and seemingly much worn. It is of uniform width, about half an inch; the length at present upwards of a yard; one end, which appears perfect, tapering gradually to a point. Intention wholly unknown.

The collection now described consists of the small portion of this remarkable discovery which came into the possession of the late General Durham, being those pieces which were left or neglected by the finder; they were picked up by the brother-in-law of the tenant and another person, both now deceased, who brought them to the General. Two remarkable relics, a bodkin and one of the scale-like plates, were rescued from the crucible, in consequence of subsequent inquiry, and were added to the collection at Largo House.

There are many points of highly interesting inquiry suggested by the examination of these curious relics. As regards the period to which they may be assigned, the evidence supplied by illuminated MSS. would lead to the conclusion that they belong to the seventh or eighth century. It is, therefore, satisfactory to establish a date upon no ill grounded evidence; many questions, however, are presented, of great moment in reference to an obscure period of the history of these islands, which must be left to future investigation. The strongly marked analogy of forms or types of ornament with those prevalent in Ireland;—the source whence that singular rudiment of decorative design was derived, by some archaeologists attributed, and with much probability, to an Oriental origin;—the purpose for which these objects were destined, assumed, perhaps on no sufficient evidence, to have been connected with appliances of warfare;—above all, the historical importance of the inquiry as relating to vestiges of international relation, to the influence of hostile migration or primitive commerce,—these and other questions into which it is not practicable now to enter, will suggest themselves to the archaeologist, in connection with the subject before us, as matters fraught with most curious interest. The striking identity in details connecting these relics with some of the earliest Christian monuments in North Britain, will stamp them also with an unusual value.

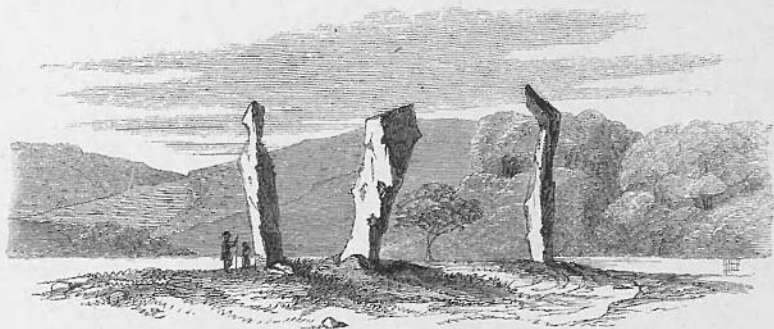
It will scarcely be conceived that a deposit of such large intrinsic value would accompany the obsequies of any invading chieftain, who casually perished in some piratical

encounter on the shores of the Firth of Forth, long infested by the marauding navigators of the North.

The name of the sepulchral mound merits a brief notice. The term "Law" is applied to the various hills in the neighbourhood, as also in other parts of Great Britain, being used to designate an elevation either natural or artificial. In Staffordshire and Derbyshire, the primitive tumulus is termed "Low;" in Ireland they are known as "Lawes." Jamieson remarks that it might be supposed, if the name be derived from the Anglo-Saxon,—Llaewe, Llawe, *agger*, *acervus*,—that it had been primarily given to artificial mounds raised over the dead, and afterwards transferred to natural elevations. The question may perhaps be legitimately raised, whether the "Law-hill" of North Britain, the ancient place of legislative assembly in certain districts, the Laug-berg of Iceland ("*locus publicus ubi judicia peraguntur*"), is a term radically the same as the Anglo-Saxon word. Upon this point we must refer our readers to the observations in Jamieson's valuable Dictionary.

In the designation, Norrie's Law, the notion naturally presents itself that some tradition may be sought, which might aid in the appropriation of the tumulus. We must leave this inquiry to Scottish etymologists. Mr. Cosmo Innes remarks that the name occurs in other places, and that he has been unable to offer any explanation which might serve to throw light upon the present inquiry. Similarity of sound might recall the Norman name, *Le Noreis*—the Northron; but this seems obviously irrelevant to the question.

In the neighbourhood of Largo may yet be seen a remarkable example of the stone monuments of a very early age, usually known as the "standing stones of Lundin." Three only now exist, as shown in the annexed representation. Tradition, however, says that there was a fourth stone, destroyed by treasure-seekers, who dug it up; and it is believed that the stones are as deep below the surface as they rise above it. They are formed of yellowish-coloured sandstone, apparently the same which abounds in the neighbourhood, containing fossil ferns, and where exposed to the weather, they have assumed a picturesque, grey colour. They stand on a flat piece of ground about three quarters of a mile from Largo Bay. The dimensions of the most lofty are,—16 feet high by $3\frac{1}{2}$, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ thick; the smallest measures $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $7\frac{1}{2}$, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ thick. We are indebted to the



The Standing Stones of Lundin, near the Bay of Largo, Fifeshire.

kindness of Mr. Dundas for a drawing and description of this venerable vestige of remote antiquity.

ALBERT WAY.

NOTE.

The value of popular tradition will be fully recognised by those who are engaged in Archaeological inquiries; it must, however, be always received with the utmost caution. It may deserve mention, although a doubt has been expressed as to the existence of such tradition, previously to the discovery being made at Largo, that, as we have been assured, an obscure belief had subsisted amongst the neighbouring peasantry, that in "Norrie's Law" had been deposited a warrior and his steed, placed in an erect position. He was, according to this popular relation, the chief of a great army, and his armour was of massive silver; in the whole host, he alone was armed in that manner.

Singular as this tale may appear, such tradition is not without parallel in the records of our National Antiquities. In the Ashmolean Museum a gold plate is preserved, which was found in the latter part of the seventeenth century near Ballyshannon, solely in consequence of the song of a harper who chanced to come in whilst the Bishop of Derry (Dr. Hopkins) was at dinner. The Bishop, desiring to know the purport of his lay, the herdsman was called in as interpreter, and explained it to be this: That at a certain spot a man of gigantic stature lay buried, his breast and back covered with plates of gold, and large golden rings upon his fingers. On digging at the place, this plate, still to be seen at Oxford, and another were found. Bishop Gibson relates this remarkable incident in his edition of Camden's *Britannia*.⁶ Another striking circumstance of a similar nature has occurred in more recent times. Some years previously to the discovery of the golden corslet at Bryn-yr Ellyllon (the Fairies' or Goblins' Hill), near Mold, in Flintshire, now deposited in the British Museum, an aged woman, returning late from Mold, imagined that she had seen a spectre cross her path to the identical mound where the skeleton encased in gold was subsequently found; she described the phantom as of gigantic size, and clad in a coat of gold, shining like the sun. This she related the next morning to the farmer, whose workmen actually found the corslet in 1833, and there can scarcely be a question that a lingering remembrance of a tradition which she had heard in early years associated with the "Goblins' Hill," presented to this woman's imagination such a golden effigy.⁷

NOTICES OF ANTIQUITIES, AND OF CATACOMBS DECORATED WITH FRESCOES, DISCOVERED AT KERTCH, IN THE CRIMEA.

THE Archaeological research, zealously and successfully prosecuted in the southern part of the Russian empire, in recent times, has been productive of many important results. Some of our readers are, doubtless, acquainted with the discoveries, comprising gold ornaments of the most elaborate and skilful workmanship, brought to light at Kertch, and made known to the archaeologists of Western Europe

⁶ Edit. 1695, p. 1022. See also Catalogue of the Ashmolean Museum, p. 139.

⁷ Archaeologia, vol. xxvi., p. 425, where a representation of this corslet is given. A

corslet of gold sold for 600*l.* to a goldsmith at Cork, which was found near Lismore. Walker's Dress of the Irish, p. 177.