

ART. XXXI.—On (1) a Roman Altar, and (2) a Roman Sepulchral Slab recently found at Carlisle : with some Notes on (3) the Roman Bagpiper, and on (4) a figure found at Bewcastle in 1765 and now at Netherby. In various Letters, with Notes by THE EDITOR.

Read at Carlisle July 23rd, 1885.

Town Hall, Carlisle, Dec. 1st, 1884.

(1) To H. A. MCKIE, ESQ.

DEAR Sir,—On Wednesday last as the men at the gravel pit were dredging for gravel they came across a heavy stone about twelve feet deep from the surface, and in a position one hundred yards north-west of the Castle at Windy Corner. On the stone being brought to the bank, I discovered it to be curiously marked with an urn. Unfortunately, part of the stone was broken off. I have given instructions to the men to try and recover the piece that is missing; as yet they have not been successful. I had the stone brought to the Town Hall, where it can now be seen at any time.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

THOMAS ORMISTON.

This altar is now in the Carlisle Museum: unfortunately the missing portion is the front of the altar, whereon would be the inscription. Windy Corner is the north-west angle of the bluff on which the Castle of Carlisle stands, where a steep path descends to the Castle Sauceries.

Lowther Street, Carlisle, 24th March, 1885.

(2) MY DEAR DR. BRUCE,—FOR some time past excavations for building purposes have been in progress in
Carlisle

Carlisle on a site known as the Spring Garden Bowling Green, and situate on the east side of Lowther Street, at its northern end. It therefore lies immediately outside the north-east angle of the Roman or mediæval city. With the exception of a small public house and some sheds this site has never been built upon. It was a garden and bowling green in 1745, when its hedges were cut down for fear they might give shelter to the Highlanders.

I have watched the excavations with interest. Over most of the area there was a thin stratum of garden soil, while the earth below had never been disturbed. Close to Lowther Street a trench, filled up with mud and miscellaneous matter, marked the city ditch, which was open in the memory of many now living.* On the north side of the garden was found a deep pocket of made soil, in which was the slab I am about to describe. Many animal bones, including, it is said, the skeleton of a donkey, were found here; and also two skulls, which I did not see, but which are said to be human. The slab was in this pocket: it was in an inclining position, face upwards, at an angle of about 45° with the horizon. Most unfortunately, before its nature was suspected, a cart passed over it and broke off the top of the stone, which was at once knocked into fragments, and either built into foundations or pitched away—at any rate, it cannot be found.

The extreme height of the slab is now four feet eight inches, and breadth three feet two inches. It is of considerable thickness and weight, and is of the local soft red sandstone. A deep alcove is cut in the upper part, in which is a figure—now headless, the head and the top of the alcove having been destroyed by the cart. The height of the figure is two feet two inches. It represents a child in upper and under tunic. The under tunic reaches to the

* Among the mud in the city ditch several broken wine bottles were found, of a shape in vogue from mediæval times to beginning of the last century. Owing to decay of the surface, the glass of which they were made displayed most beautiful iridescent colours.

little feet, which peep out beneath it, and its tight sleeves come down to the wrists; the upper tunic comes to the



knees,

knees, and has large sleeves reaching to the elbows. A girdle is round the waist, and a large scarf or comforter has been wrapt round the child's throat and chest to protect it from the cold. The child probably died of bronchitis. The costume, if in woollen material, would be at once, warm, sensible, and convenient. The left hand is raised to the breast, the right, extending downwards, holds a fir-cone.

Below the figure a panel is cut in the stone, two feet two inches broad, by one foot high, and having on each side the well-known dovetail projections. On this is

D I S
V A C I A I N F
A N S A N I I I

The letters are unusually distinct, though before the stone was washed I had some doubt as to the final I I I, as a flaw in the stone made it look like UI (not VI); but after the stone was washed and placed in the museum, under strong light, both sun and gas, the I I I came out clear.

I venture to read this—

VACIA INFANS AN [NORUM] III.

“Vacia, an Infant of three years;”

“Vacia” occurs on a slab found at Great Chesters (*Lap. Sep.*, 282), which is expanded as—

D[IIS] M[ANIBUS]
Æ[IO] MERCU-
RIALI CORNICUL[ARIO]
VACIA SOROR
FECIT.

(3) You will be glad to hear that the Roman Bagpiper has made his appearance in the Museum. I had him brought from Stanwix in October last; but, owing to his weight—over half a ton—we dare not take him up stairs and



and over the floor. However, a few days ago, we opened a back entry, and the Corporation workmen hauled the piper up with tackle to a safe place, with a cross wall under

under him. He is much disfigured with tar from the water butt, which he latterly supported.—I remain, yours truly,

RICH. S. FERGUSON.

(4) At Netherby is a stone on which is represented a seated figure. We reproduce the engraving from the *Lap. Sep.*, No 785, where the stone is stated to have been found



at Netherby; but in an album belonging to Society of Antiquaries is a drawing of this stone and under it the following note. “Drawing of a stone found recently at Bewcastle and removed to Netherby, 1765.”