

ART. XIII.—*A Bay Window in Penrith Churchyard, with some notes from the Penrith Parish Registers.* By George Watson.

Read at Grasmere, June 25th, 1891.

On the west side of Penrith churchyard, attached to the premises of Miss Moscrop, is a bay window of peculiarly quaint and interesting character which, from having lately been denuded of its coat of lime rough-cast, has become increasingly interesting from the discovery that its walls are composed of stone blocks from Penrith Castle. This, however, is no new revelation, for in many instances, when old houses in Penrith have been re-built or walls stripped of plaster, the fact has been disclosed that the large time-worn ashlar blocks of the old castle have been extensively utilised in building.

The destruction of Penrith Castle (as with many other ancient structures) has by the popular voice been ascribed to Oliver Cromwell, and on the strength of that false faith a modern road near Penrith Castle was, about 30 years ago, named by the Town Authorities "Cromwell Road", while at the same time another road had a pseudo ancient name given to it, and Penrith, like Kendal, became possessed of a Stricklandgate. That the principal destroyers of Penrith Castle were not Cromwell's Ironsides but the citizens of Penrith, is proved by the report of a commission instituted by Queen Elizabeth to enquire into the condition of the Royal Manor of Penrith: this report is quoted in Walker's History of Penrith as stating that

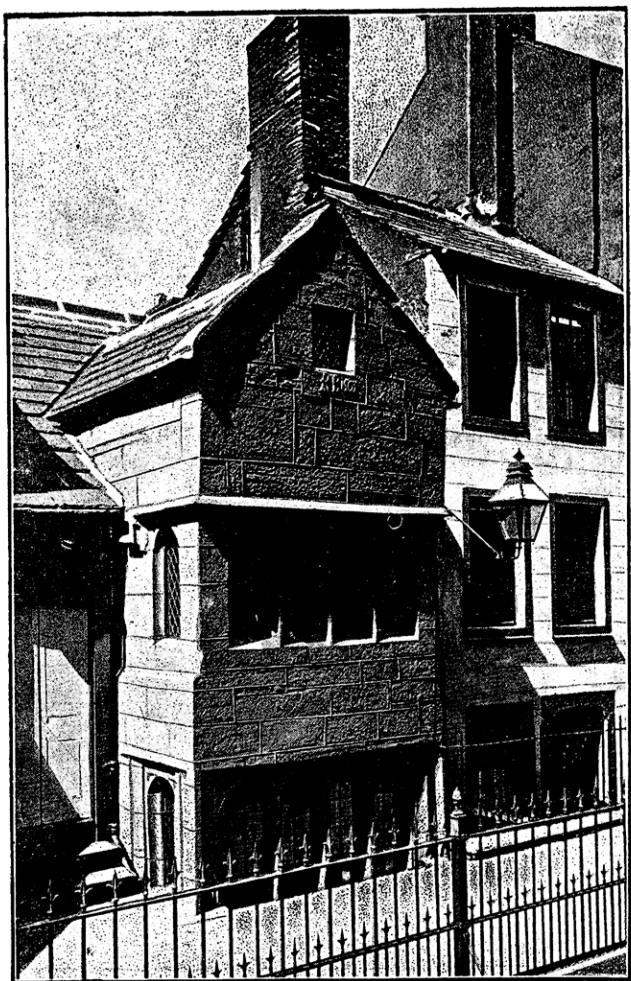
The outermost gate house of the Castle was in utter ruin. The timber on three stables within the Castle was rotten and ready to fall down. The Chapel, the great Chamber, the great Hall, the Kitchens, and all other offices were in utter ruin and decay, and not repairable.

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The Gates of the Castle were in ruin. Richard Dudley, late steward of Penrith, had taken from the Castle, by warrant of Anthony Barwise, 30 cart loads of stones to build a prison in Penrith. Thomas Carleton, of Penrith, had six loads; Cuthbert, bailiff of Penrith, had three score of hewn stones; and several other persons had removed different quantities in the first year of King Edward VI.

During the month of June, 1648, when the Parliamentary army under General Lambert occupied Penrith, it is not unlikely the demolition of the castle might be accelerated by being stripped of its lead for casting into bullets; that is, if any lead then existed, but judging from a note in the parish registers, when the newly appointed vicar Mr. John Hastie records his induction in 1601, this is not likely to have been the case: he adds the pitiful intimation that—"The brewing lead was all cut in pieces by the Scotch soldiers to make bullets of." It is therefore scarcely probable, considering how completely Penrith had been devastated by the enemy from over the Border, that much lead was left about the Castle for the Parliamentary soldiers to appropriate.

The bay window in Penrith Churchyard is rectangular on plan, 9 feet 6 inches wide and projecting 4 feet; it is in two stories and is surmounted by a gable, in which is an inscription in strong relief of the date 1563 and the initials of the building-proprietor R.B. The letters are of unusually good Elizabethan character, and are repeated without the date on the north side of the erection. Acting on the suggestion of my friend Mr. Whitehead I searched the parish registers to discover if possible who R.B. might have been. Azquest of this nature is generally a hopeless one, when only the man's initials are given in the inscription: even when the initial of the wife's baptismal name is added, unless their marriage register can be found to give the wife's name, there is no chance of discriminating between two or more men whose names have the same initials; after the year 1670 however the
prospect



HOUSE, PENRITH CHURCHYARD.

prospect of success is somewhat better as Mr. John Child, the new vicar, commenced to add to all baptismal registers the christian name of the mother, but in any case without some historical or traditionary side light you may get far wrong, as when a lintel inscription in Penrith bearing the date 1717 and the initials W. & M.R. was assigned to William Richardson, bookseller, and his wife Mary on the strength of that worthy couple having children baptised a year or two before and after that date, instead of to William and Margaret Raincock, of whose ownership of the house there is good traditional evidence, and whose names from their marriage in 1694 to the baptism of their last child in 1711 appear regularly in the registers, followed in 1734 by the record of the burial of Mr. William Raincock, mercer.

My search for the R.B. who built the bay window, commencing at the beginning of the registers, seven years before the date of the window, and extending fourteen years after, was rewarded with the discovery of a baker's dozen of R.B.'s bearing the surnames of Bartram, Brothwaite, Blencairn, Bignal, Bell, Burton, Birbeck, Brisbie, Barker, Blaiklock, Browne, Barwise, and Bank, with only the two baptismal names of *Robert* and *Richard* amongst them, with exception of one *Roland*. There was a large choice of R.B.s for the honour of having built the window; Robert Brothwaite appeared a likely man being much to the front about the date of the inscription, 1563: in December, 1562, his son John was baptised and Janet his wife buried; in April following the year of the date he married a new wife and the year following presents Isabel for baptism. I was inclined to adopt the Brothwaite as the man wanted, when a new discovery ruled otherwise. In the yard behind is another wall inscription forming a facsimile of the R.B. and date on the window, but with the addition of one of those curious figurations known as "Merchant's Marks". As far as my knowledge goes at present,

present, I do not know whether a wholesale trader could legally adopt a "Merchant's Mark" of his own will, or

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whether he could only do so by being enrolled a member of some guild of merchants, and so become legally entitled to be called "Merchant". I am inclined to think the latter was the case, from the fact that now and then the parish registers and churchwardens' books designate a man *merchant* as though it was a title to which he had some acknowledged right, and this appears to have been the case with one of the thirteen R.B.'s whose burial register stands thus—1577, July, last day, was Robert Bartram, *merchant*, buried. This entry taken in connection with the R.B. merchant's mark I think clearly identifies Robert Bartram as the builder of the window. The third R.B. initials on the north side of the window may have been in compliment to Robert Bartram, junior, who the registers inform us was christened 1563, the year the window was built. Besides the Bartram "merchant's mark" I know only of one other in Penrith; it is similar in its main features, differing only in minor details, and has the representation of a pair of scissors below: the date is 1584 and the initials are T.E.L., which I feel sure are those of Thomas and Elizabeth Langhorn, whose marriage register is found in 1573. T. Langhorn was probably a cloth merchant. The Langhorns were a leading family in Penrith all through the 17th century; this Langhorn died in 1609. A Thomas Langhorn was a Justice of the Peace during the Commonwealth, and figures in the churchwarden's book as inflicting fines for swearing and Sabbath-breaking, and a Thomas Langhorn died in 1693 during the operation of the woollen Act and was one of the five out of the 1,137 who died at Penrith during the operation

operation of that Act, in whose case the law was defied by being buried in linen and the penalty of £5 paid.

Before leaving the subject of merchant's marks I will just mention that having started the subject in Notes and Queries for discussion I received an interesting communication from a gentleman at Paris informing me that a query similar to mine had lately been proposed in a French journal, and sending me diagrams of five merchant's marks given in the journal mentioned, two being French, two Swiss, and one Scotch, and it is curious to note that the central figure of all of them (something like the Arabic numeral 4) is similar to those at Penrith.

It may perhaps be worth mentioning that I have found in the Penrith registers two entries supplying information of which the late Mr. W. Jackson in his valuable paper on Gerard Lowther's house in Penrith (Trans. Vol. 4) expressed his want. Mr. Jackson speaking of Gerard Lowther's death says:—

I do not at present know the date of his death, but it was very near that of his wife, who, I am informed, was buried at Penrith Dec. 30, 1596.

This is correct ; the entry of her burial is as follows :—

1596 Dec 30 Mrs Lucie the wife of Gerrat Lowther Esq. Buried.

Gerard Lowther's burial is also recorded, but, like some other parts in the register book, some person, probably with a view to rendering the faded writing more readable, had smeared it over with (I fancy) oil, which in time became perfectly opaque, and rendered the writing utterly illegible. By the application of a re-agent, however, I revived the ink sufficiently to show distinctly through its obscurity, and so read the lines. The entry follows two others of somewhat curious interest :—

1587 July 14 daye a yoor Ladye unknown—buried. Same night dyed a Scottis^h (Scotchman) at the Crown who was boweled and his corpse carried into Scotland. Same night Mr Gerrad Lowther was buried in the south church door.

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By "buried in the south church door," I think may be understood that the burial was in the south porch. Bishop Nicolson, in his references to the old church (soon after, alas ! ruthlessly demolished), mentions distinctly the south porch of the church. The death of Gerard Lowther occurred two months before the plague broke out. Mr. Jackson further says :—

How the house descended after Gerard's death I am unable to say, but I presume it passed into the hands of Gerard the younger, his nephew, who also died childless.

That conjecture of our deeply regretted author is all but proved correct by the following entry in the registers—
curt, but conclusive :—

1627 Oct^r 6 Gerard Lowther. Buried.
