



SCULPTURED BASIN FOUND AT DRUMBURGH.

TO FACE P. 115.

ART. X.—*Sculptured Basin found at Drumburgh.* By  
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*Communicated at Durham, June 20th, 1901.*

THE extremely interesting object to which your attention is directed has now been placed in the Museum at Tullie House, Carlisle, and was discovered at Drumburgh, built into the wall of an out-house on the estate of R. L. Nixon-Lawson, Esq., who very kindly allowed it to be taken away for preservation in the Museum.

Where it was originally we do not know. It is not at all clear why it should have been used to form part of the wall of the out-house, as it was twice as thick a stone as the builder needed; one half was being carefully preserved between stones and mortar, the other half was exposed to the elements.

The inside half was flush with the wall of the out-house and covered with many coats of whitewash. This I have removed with hydrochloric acid. It will be seen that the floral ornamentation on that side is not much better preserved for all its coatings of lime. The foliage, whatever it may be, is slightly different to that on the opposite side, though similar in character; the flower is another shape. On the under side is a dowel, very likely made to fit it to the pillar or pedestal on which it formerly stood. The basin is of red sandstone; it is square with splayed corners and has an octagonal base, and is ornamented on three sides only, leading one to suppose that it originally stood against a wall or pillar. The ornament consists of ball flowers on stalks, boldly and rudely carved, yet with the character of graceful work which is noticed as occurring at the end of the 12th

century. The conventional flowers with the strings of beads resemble those of the Bridekirk font.

The dimensions are thus:—height, 1ft 4in. ; diameter, 1ft. 6in. ; inside of bowl, 1ft. 2in. ; depth of bowl, 6in. I do not think that the vessel is a baptismal font, but believe it to be a holy water stoup, such as were very common in the 12th century, and were placed just inside the church door and used by the worshippers to sprinkle themselves with the holy water contained therein. In support of this theory perhaps you will allow me to advance the following reasons.

Immersion was practised in this country until the Reformation and occasionally later, and all fonts up to this date were made sufficiently large for this purpose. The size of them, however, varies considerably ; and during the perpendicular period of font architecture (1377-1649) some fonts were nearly as shallow as the vessel under review, one in Kent being  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. deep, and another found in Surrey 9 ins.

Though I am aware that pouring or sprinkling was not unusual previous to the Reformation, yet dipping appears to have been in this country the more usual mode of baptism ; for from an illumination in Rou's *Life of Richard Beauchamp*, Earl of Warwick (born 1381), it appears that the Earl was baptised by dipping ; so also were Prince Arthur (eldest son of Henry VII.) King Edward the VI., and Queen Elizabeth. Simpson, in his *Ancient Baptismal Fonts*, says "not one of the Rituals . . . contains any permission to use pouring or sprinkling when a child is brought to the Church." The first instance of pouring being allowed in public baptism is in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. which says: "and if the child be weake it shall suffice to poure water upon it." In all probability dipping was from this time by degrees abandoned, but many years elapsed ere it was so entirely ; for a century later Dr. Featley says "Dipping may be used in baptisme, and if the childe be strong, and

the weather and climate temperate, it is very fit to be used, and the Church of England both alloweth it and practiseth it."

The fact of only three sides of the stone having been carved, indicates that at one time it stood against a wall, or pillar; this is unlike the position of a font, which is generally placed on a pedestal, so as to allow one to walk round it. All this, I take it, points to this most interesting relic of 12th century stone work, as having been a holy water stoup, and not as was first supposed a baptismal font. Although this style of font is the oldest of the four classes of architecture it is yet the most common, and whatever alteration a church may have undergone, we sometimes find a Norman font in a fabric, of which no part is near so old; and, indeed, in some parts of the kingdom, the Norman and Early English fonts, although plain, appear to have been held in some veneration, and were often allowed to remain when the church itself was rebuilt in a totally different style.

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