

Fig: 2

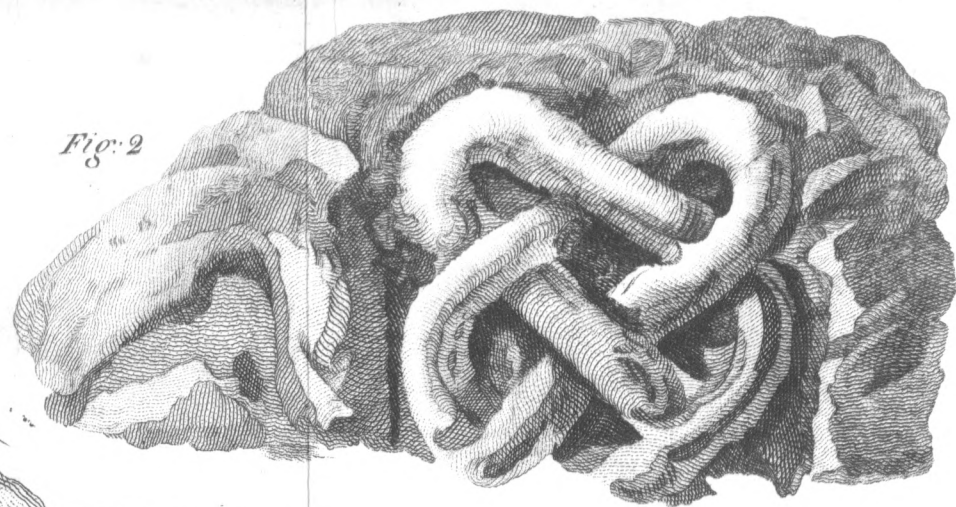


Fig: 1



Some Account of a Saxon Inscription, on a Stone found near Falstone, in the County of Northumberland, in a Letter to ROBERT SPEARMAN, Esq. of Sewing Shields, from the Rev. JAMES WOOD, Minister of the Scotch Chapel at Falstone.

THE Antiquarian Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, instead of a copy of the inscription which they enquire after, are heartily welcome to the stone which bears it. I will send it by the carrier as soon as I can. This expedient will, I think, answer most of the queries which accompanied your letter.

I farm about an acre of land in Hawkhope-hill, belonging to Thomas Ridley, Esq. of Park-end; it lies on the north side of the North Tyne, and was formerly divided into two patches, by a low sloping bank, overgrown with thorns and brambles. About six years ago I employed labourers to clear this bank for cultivation; and then and there the stone in question was found, about three feet from the surface. It is a kind of grey freestone, rather smooth on the one side, having the inscription on the other, about a foot long, and in the form of a bar of lead from the smelt mill. No vestiges, however, of a church, or burial-ground, at or near the place can be discerned.* The English and Scots chapels of Falstone are both within a quarter of a mile of the spot where the stone was found; but, so far as I can learn,

* Mr. Wood, in 1814, pointed out to me the field in which this stone was found; and "Ruins" are marked upon it, in Armstrong's large map of Northumberland. By the form of the surface of the back part of the stone it appears that it has been broken off a larger stone. I suppose it to have been a part of the ornament of the capital of a Saxon column. In the annexed engraving it is given in its true size. The smaller figure represents its ends.

neither of these edifices can have any claim to antiquity, the first having been founded about 90 years ago, and the last about 110.

Within the bounds of this chapelry of Falstone and its immediate vicinity, there are some houses consisting of very thick walls, with stone vaults below, which have evidently been erected for the purpose of defending the possessors of them, and their cattle, against the depredations of the neighbouring moss-troopers. Here, too, are some remains of ancient castles; but we have no authentic account concerning them, and tradition, you know, is not to be depended upon. Wonderful stories, indeed, are told of them. Tarsset-hall, for instance, on the north side of the Tyne, and Dally-castle, on the south, may be about a mile distant; and there is, they say, between the two, a subterraneous road cut out, even below the bed of the river. Less than half a century ago vulgar superstition, it is said, has been so quick-sighted as to discern horses and chariots driving between these two old castles at midnight.

Tarsset-hall, together with a vast extent of land about Tyne-head, are reported to have been the property of the Cummins; and tradition makes up a marriage between an heiress of this domain and one of the house of Northumberland; and consequently, the estates remain to this day in the present noble family.

JAMES WOOD.