

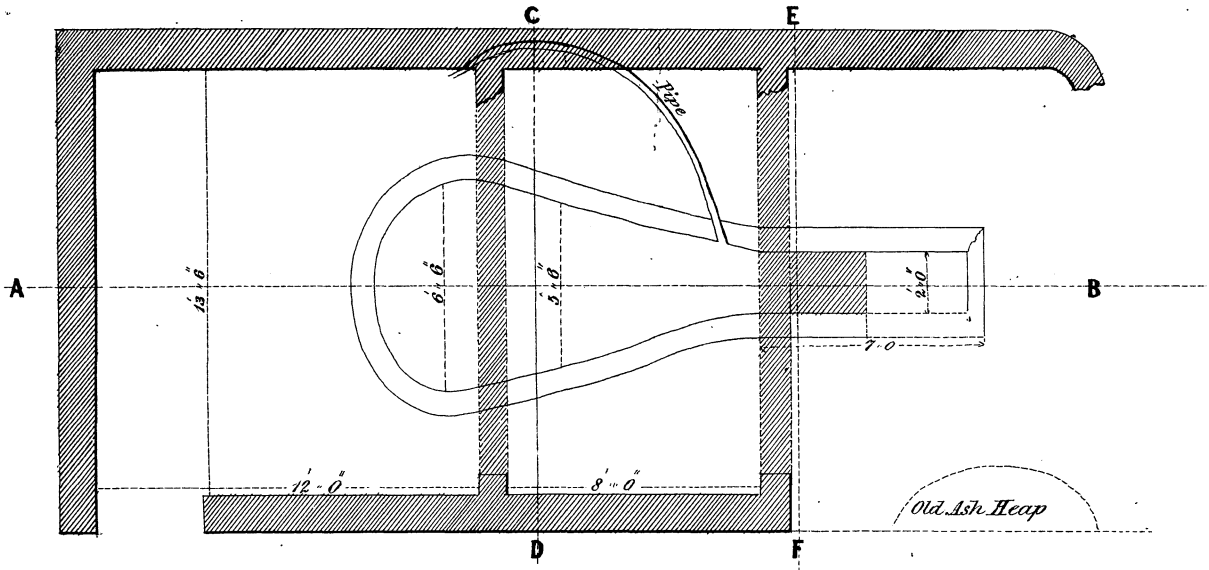
No. V.—*Some Account of a Cave found in working a Limestone Quarry, on the Sea Coast, near North Sunderland, by Mr. GEORGE GREY BELL.*

IN the month of August, 1844, a very singular place of concealment was found in working a limestone quarry upon the sea coast, near North Sunderland, in the parish of Bambrough, at a place called the Snook Point, which lies about half way between Bambrough and Dunstanbrough Castles. When first found great curiosity was manifested in the neighbourhood, and it was believed to have been a place for the concealment of contraband goods, the officers of the coast guard, therefore, took possession until it was properly examined, when they declared their belief that it had never been intended for, or used, as a “smuggling hole;” and from the neat manner in which it was built, the small size of the entrance and cavity, from its being neatly flagged out, and having a clay pipe or conduit communicating with a hut or cottage above, for the conveyance of air or sound, it was also my conviction that it had never been intended for contraband goods, but had been constructed in a time of great trouble for the concealment of some fugitive of note. I, therefore, took the dimensions, and made drawings representing the exact state in which it was found after the sand and soil had been removed.

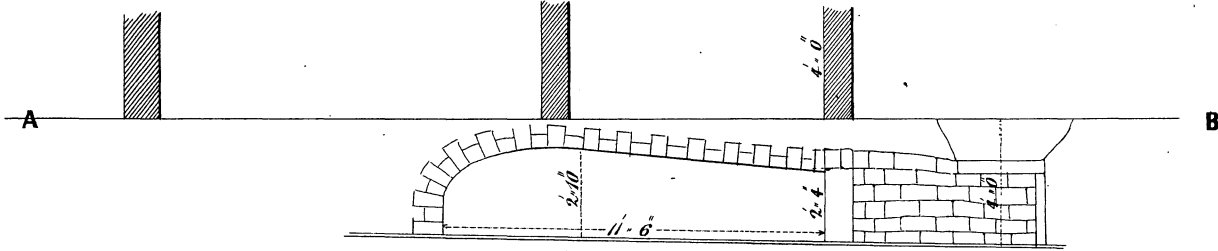
Nothing can be traced from history to throw any light upon the subject, without, indeed, we take the troublesome times in 1463-4, when Margaret, the Queen of Henry VI., held the castles of Bambrough, Dunstanbrough, and Alnwick, against King Edward; these castles were her principal and her last strongholds in the North of England.

History informs us that Margaret, after the Battle of Hexham (May 15, 1464,) and the overthrow of her hopes fled with her son, Prince Edward, towards the sea coast, where she lay for some time concealed, and, afterwards escaped to Flanders; but it does not inform us which coast she fled to. She could not fly to the east or west coast, as there she would have

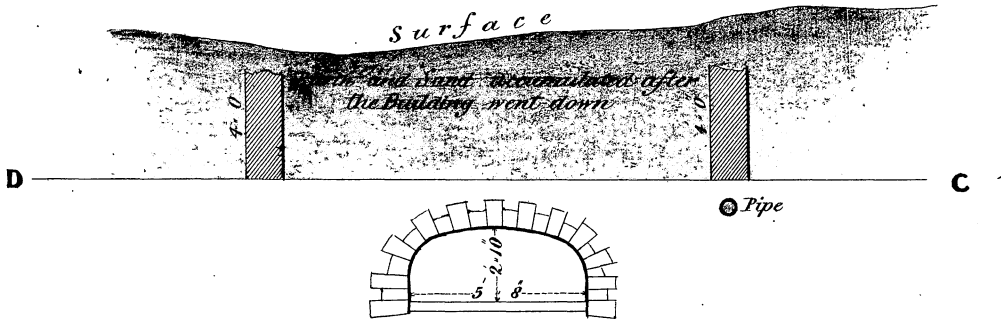
PLAN OF A CAVE OR PLACE OF CONCEALMENT, DISCOVERED AT NORTH SUNDERLAND, IN THE PARISH OF BAMBOURGH, 1844.



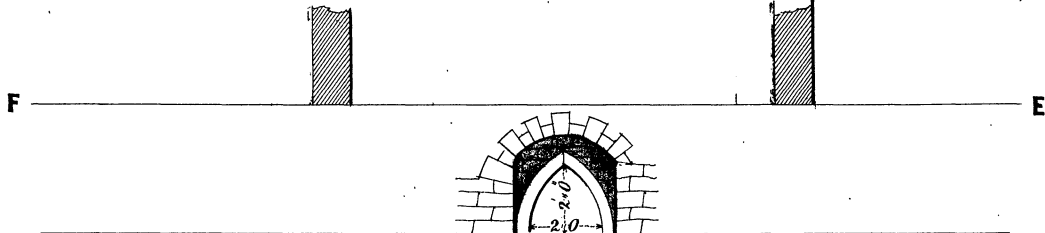
Section from A to B



Section from D to C



Section from F to E



Scale of Six Feet to One Inch



passed through the midst of her enemies, some of her followers having been executed at Newcastle, Hexham, and Carlisle, a few days after the Battle of Hexham, therefore, she must have fled towards the northern coast, to a known place of concealment and safety.

Now as Queen Margaret was the head and life of the Lancaster party, it cannot be doubted that her personal safety, and that of the prince her son, was of the most vital importance to their cause, and, therefore, landing, as she often did, on the coast in the immediate vicinity of the above castles held by her followers, and these followers sometimes changing sides, she could not at all times trust herself within the walls for fear of treachery; indeed it does not appear that she ever made any one of them her residence, but must have had some private place of concealment near, and this cave, in all probability, is the place where she concealed herself. In *Ridpath's Border History* the particulars of Margaret's circumstances in Northumberland are represented as being very painful and harassing.

“In the following spring Margaret sailed over to France, and having obtained a loan of a small sum of money and a supply of two thousand men from the French King, on condition of delivering up Calais when it should be in her power, she set sail for the northern coast of England, and landed in October, 1463, *near-Bambrough*. Still the country did not take arms in her favour, but either through the treachery of Sir Ralph Gray, who was governor of Alnwick under Edward, or on account of the scarcity of provisions, that fortress fell again into her hands. Hearing, however, of Edward's approach, who left London on the 30th November, she found it necessary again to seek refuge in Scotland. For this purpose she went on board the fleet that had brought her from France, and her General ‘Breze’ accompanied her with some part of her forces. But a violent storm arising, the Queen, not without great danger, escaped into the port of Berwick, and Breze being driven ashore at Holy Island, his ships were burnt, and 4 or 500 of his men were either killed or taken prisoners. Breze himself escaped in a fishing boat which conveyed him to the Queen at Berwick.

“Breze's son, together with Lord Hungerford, had the keeping of Alnwick Castle, with a garrison of three hundred men. The Duke of Somerset, the

Earl of Pembroke, Lord Roose, and Sir Ralph Percy had the keeping of Bambrough, with a garrison of three hundred men, and Sir Richard Tunstal, Thomas Findern, Dr Morton, and some others of less note kept the castle of Dunstanbrough with one hundred and twenty men.

“Edward on arriving in Northumberland finding no enemy in the field laid siege at once to the three castles, Alnwick, Bambrough, and Dunstanbrough. Bambrough was surrendered on Christmas eve, and the Duke of Somerset and *Sir Ralph Percy*, who held it for the Queen were *pardoned and received into favour by Edward*. Dunstanbrough yielded three days after, and Alnwick was taken on the 6th January, 1464, by the Earl of Warwick.

“In the following spring Margaret made another attempt in vain; she had now lost the favour of the Scottish King, in consequence of a truce made between Edward and him; but by the interest of some Scottish chiefs she again entered Northumberland. Sir Ralph Gray at the same time surprised and took the Castle of Bambrough and held it for the Queen.

“A part of the Queen’s forces were defeated by Neville at Hedgely Moor, April 25, 1464, when Sir Ralph Percy, deserted by his companions in arms, fell fighting bravely in the field of battle; and three weeks after, Neville having met the invading army in their camp at Linels, near Hexham, totally defeated and dispersed them. The Queen and her son, with the greatest difficulty having gained the sea coast, passed over to Sluys, in Flanders.”

Sir Ralph Percy, when dying on the field of battle at Hedgely Moor, is said to have cried out that “he had saved the bird in his bosom,” meaning, as it was then believed, that he had kept his oath of fealty to Henry VI.; but as Percy had only five months before that, after the siege of Bambrough, taken part with Edward *against* Henry, I am inclined to believe, that this figurative expression of his alluded to Margaret, and meant nothing more than that she was now in a place of safety by his means, and most likely in *his* place of concealment on or near his own estate, and that the cave represented in the drawings, is in all likelihood the place; and that she again fled to it after the Battle of Hexham, until she could get a ship to convey her from the island.

The situation of this cave seems to have been judiciously chosen on a high and barren point near the coast, neatly built, and about half way between Bambrough and Dunstanbrough Castles, with Alwick Castle lying about 14 miles south and west of it.

GEORGE GRAY BELL.

*Newcastle upon Tyne, June 20th, 1845.*