

XVII.—*Communication relative to a remarkable number of Horse-shoes found on the farm of West Nisbet, in the county of Berwick ; supposed to be indicative of the site of the Battle of Nisbet Muir, A. D. 1355.*

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THE Horse-shoe which is presented to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, along with this memorandum, by Douglas Ainslie, Esquire, of Cairnbank, was found on the estate of Lord Sinclair, on clearing some ground on the farm of West Nisbet, in the county of Berwick, in Spring 1822. The whole field in the vicinity was very thickly strewed with shoes of a similar structure, to the number of some hundreds. Owing to the singularity of the circumstance, Mr Ainslie sent a specimen of these reliques, thinking the Society might feel some interest in the discovery.

It is supposed (on referring to Ridpath's Border History) that the battle of Nisbet Muir, 24th June 1355, was fought in the

immediate vicinity of the spot where these shoes were turned up. This skirmish took place after the captivity of King David Bruce. At this period, Edward III. was engaged in an invasion of Calais, and the Black Prince commanded in the province of Gascony. John, king of France, who had shortly before succeeded to his father Philip, in order to make a diversion in his own favor, engaged his allies the Scots to make war on the English, by harassing them with frequent inroads along the borders. For this purpose, he sent over Eugene de Garentiere, an eminent French knight, with sixty men at arms, and 40,000 crowns of the sun, to enable the Scots to raise a regular force.

Patrick, Earl of March, and Lord William Douglas (afterwards Earl of Douglas) having united forces, sent Sir William Ramsay of Dalhousie before them to lay waste Norham and the adjacent country. This Ramsay effected; and enticed a considerable body of the English to pursue him as far as Nisbet Muir, where the Scots were lying in ambush with their main body and the French auxiliaries. The English, being thus unexpectedly attacked by superior numbers, were, after a gallant resistance, put to the rout; and several persons of distinction, amongst whom Sir Thomas Gray, and his son, Sir James Dacres, and others were made prisoners. On the side of the Scots, Sir John Haliburton and Sir James Turnbull were slain; *vide* Fordun, Scot. lib. 14, cap. 9; Ridpath's Border Hist. p. 340; Guthrie's History of Scotland.

It is not unlikely, therefore, that the shoes found at West Nisbet were part of those belonging to the English and Scottish cavalry at this skirmish, or perhaps some other battle of greater moment. It is worthy of remark, however, that all the shoes were of a similar size and structure, and might, perhaps, on that account, be supposed to belong to the same nation. The size appears to be *uncommonly small*; and seems to prove the diminutive breed of horses then used in the border frays, which hardly appear to have been so large as the present Galloway race.