

## I.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF ANTIQUITIES NEAR LOCH ETIVE. BY R. ANGUS SMITH, Ph.D., F.R.S., &c., MANCHESTER. PART II. (PLATES XXIII. AND XXIV.)

I brought before this Society last year a list, with a short description of antiquities at and near the mouth of Loch Etive, and I wish now to add some fuller explanations, and to make some additions. I shall begin with the largest, the centre point, Dun Macuisneachan, or Dun Mhac Usnach, commonly called Macsniochan. It must not be forgotten that this little corner of Argyllshire contains nearly all that I know of Scottish archaeology, and I bring my small contribution with diffidence.

The well which exists on the dun has been, for at least a hundred years, connected by some persons with that stream which is found on the opposite hill of Dun (Valanree), Bhaile an Rìgh. The latest result of digging there was mentioned when the first paper was passing through the press, but it must now be given in detail. This well, which men living at present had considered very deep, and whose fathers, when they threw down stones, were said to have waited a perceptible time till the sound shewed the bottom to be reached, was found, on being cleared out, to be at the very deepest part only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet, but even that was only for a small space. The mysterious water was found coming through a crack in the rock, and was no more than could be accounted for by the drainage ground of the dun, a few feet above it, and in direct contact. There seems to have been an opportunity taken to remove the friable rock, so as to gain depth, but any attempt to go beyond the solid hard slate below was not made. That rock slopes down on one side, making the depth from 3 feet to about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet. In such matters we must draw conclusions according to our own judgment; they are not to be absolutely proved. My conclusion is, that the well proves an incapacity to penetrate hard stone, even where there was a will to do so. At the junction of the brittle and compact rock, the fissure or apparent crack is seen moist with water trickling out. The drainage ground in a wet climate is enough for as many people as could live comfortably in the dun, even if they used more water than we supposed them to have done in early days. The story of the supply from the opposite hill, and

that of the wooden pipes, found recorded in books for a hundred years, may now disappear.

*Vitrified Forts.*—I am disposed to trouble you with an opinion regarding the use and mode of building the forts of partly vitrified and partly loose stones. When opening a large cairn, to be described immediately, it was found essential to be very careful lest legs should be broken by the fall of the stones. The boulders being roundish, it was necessary to make a very long slope before we found it safe to remove the lower and heavier. This work connected itself in my mind with the appearance of the walls at Caterthun in Forfar, where are enormous piles of loose stones. It seems as if these had once been built up as a wall, at least I perceived what I took to be indications of order, or slight glimpses of a double wall, with connecting walls between. But all are in a ruinous state, the boulders having rolled down. That they did build walls of boulders of a similar kind in a quite perpendicular manner in early times, was known to me from seeing a passage into the centre of a cairn now laid open at Kilmartin. Let us suppose such a wall to have been built to surround a fort. An enemy could loosen a stone easily, and one stone so removed might cause cartloads to fall, making a breach in the wall at once. This might even be done with such care and speed that the enemy might have time to run away before being injured. The amount which is about to fall is not moved at once: first one or two stones roll down; the movement loosens those above, and they go on increasing like an avalanche. This must soon have called out the idea of making the foundations solid, and the first notion being rude and violent, ended in the use of fire. But the builders do not seem to have made the whole wall solid to the top; had they done this, they would have lost one of the advantages of a loose wall, namely, the opportunity it gives of throwing down pieces on an enemy's head, an old fashion, even on classic ground. The vitrified wall was therefore finished by being raised higher with loose stones.

In the drawings of the cairn figured here, large plain blocks are seen below, and every wall is finished with small pieces above.

It was not necessary to go above the working height of a man with the vitrification. By speaking in this way I seek to picture the conditions sought to be attained by the builders of vitrified forts. We do not find that the vitrified walls were ever high; whilst loose stones are, if not

always, at least sometimes, still found above them. Perhaps the state of things is best seen at Noath, where there is a very broad vitrified base, as if to support the loose stones above. If we suppose the vitrified wall to have been high, and the loose wall to have been merely an inferior building made after the decay of the other, we lead ourselves into more distant ages and greater difficulties, without a sufficient reason. It is pleasant when we can bring everything within an intelligible period, and to do this one avoids excessive and geological epochs when possible. These early periods seem to have been attended with few changes; after the beginning of progress the eras of change seem to have come nearer to each other, and now they are so close that five or ten years make a wonderful difference in external life and in modes of thought.

*Legend of the Sons of Uisneach.*—Since the aim of antiquarian research is to learn the history of ideas as well as of materials of outward civilisation and barbarism, it is by no means necessary for us, in examining the past, to keep to written or oral traditions regarding facts. If we seek the feelings and habits as shown in romance, we sometimes obtain allusions which are as valuable to us as if they were records in the gravest and best attested history. In speaking of vitrified forts, we have no traditions which name them as such; even romance is almost silent, whilst history has scarcely as yet begun to speak. You will excuse me, therefore, if I seek, out of some names and allusions, to try to connect romantic history with them. I cannot yet hope to do the same with exact history. In doing so, however, I am doing nothing original in idea; I only follow Mr Skene, who has already begun it in his introduction to the *Dean of Lismore's* book, p. lxxxix. That which I bring is merely a commentary on the paragraph and note:—

“The children of Uisneach were Cruithne, and must have preceded the Scots, for the great scene of their Scotch adventures are the districts of Lorn, Loch Awe, and Cowall, afterwards in possession of the Dalriadic Scots; thus, in the vicinity of Oban, we have Dun Mhic Uisneachan, now corruptly called in guide-books Dun Mac Sniachan, a fort with vitrified remains; and here we have in Loch Etive, Glen Uisneach and Suidhe Deardhuil. The names of the three sons of Uisneach were Ainle, Ardan, and Naoise; and it is remarkable that Adamnan, in his *Life of St Columba*, written in the seventh century, appears to mention only three

localities in connection with St Columba's journey to the palace of the King of the Picts, near Loch Ness, and these are Cainle, Arcardan, and the Flumen Nesæ. Two vitrified forts in the neighbourhood of Loch Ness are called Dun Deardhuil." And in a note,—“It is remarkable that the ancient legends of Cuchullin and the sons of Uisneach connect them with those remarkable structures called vitrified forts. Dun Scathaig, Dun Mhic Uisneachan, and Deardhuil are vitrified forts, and the latter is a common name for them. There is probably a mythic meaning under this.”

In every account given of the district we have the words Beregonium and Dun Macsniochan. Mr Skene first showed us how to write the name. He also tells us the name of the family who settled there, according to accounts, for a time, and mentions the remarkable connection between them and Cuchullin with vitrified forts in other places as well. This really is the pith of the matter, and with Mr Skene on the ground of Celtic history or romance being master, I have no desire to differ, I am content to admire. My object, however, is to illustrate whatever can be made clearer about this part of Lorn, and also to find what real interest there is connected with it; and if it is not against the wishes of the Society, I will spend a few minutes in analysing the story more fully, and in showing the hold it had taken on the locality long ago, at least as long as the date of the earliest manuscript. The names are as distinctly on the ground as ever, but the story has left the people. The date of the personages is said by Irish writers to be the first century, but let us believe with Mr Skene that the times before the fifth century are to be considered uncertain. I must remark on this, however, that, since writing, as we are told by the same author, was introduced into Ireland in the fifth century, we may fairly allow a good deal of truth in the transactions said to have occurred only two or three or even four centuries before. We must allow something for tradition, especially in early times. A few centuries are quite unable to eradicate some facts, although a few years wipe out others. When, therefore, the sons of Uisneach are said to have lived at the time of Christ, I am quite disposed to think that they may have lived within the limits of tradition, and do not confound them with the fabulous kings who go up in a long race from Ireland to the garden of Eden. Tradition already has done wonders for the Uisneachs we know, because it has stamped their names on the hills and rocks, islands and

woods, and even a farm holds one. I see no reason for looking on the story alluded to as mythical, but it must be remembered that in all probability the events are brought forward in the spirit and with the manners of the writer instead of the actors, and that it is an old tale, garnished as Virgil did that of Æneas, or Tennyson those of Arthur. When we know the date of the writing or composition, we shall know the manners of the times pictured. Meantime, the story tells of people who lived at various places of the district and left their mark, and of the opinions regarding them entertained by people in times nominally perhaps within our history, but when the place was but little known to those outside it. It tells of Deirdri and the daughter of Felim, storyteller to the King of Ulster, Concobhar or Conor. Deirdri went off with Naisi, a son of Uisneach, although she was betrothed to Conor. (That part of the story which does not suit our purpose is left out.) Naisi's two brothers and many attendants went with him, and obtained a territory from the King of Alba. There they seem to have had great success, but being fond of their native country, returned as soon as Conor sent for them. The messenger who enticed them was called Fergus; it is said that he and his two sons and shield-bearer alone went, and they moved forward "to the forts of the sons of Uisneach, and to the Lake Eitche in Alba." The Irish is, "Do gluaisedar rompa go daingen Mhac n'Uisneach acas go Loch n'Eitche an Albain." In other words, they came to the fort of Dun Mac Uisneachan (now a vitrified fort) at Loch Etive.

The valley of the Etive may be said to stop at Craig Valanree (Bhail an Righ), or the rock of the King's fort at the mouth of Loch Etive, and under which there is a burying-place, in which the ancients buried perhaps persons connected with the fort. Loch Etive, we may suppose, would reach farther, that is to Ardnamucknish. In any case, the relation is definite, and as if to prevent all mistake. Another account says, "They sailed across the sea until they came to Loch Etive, to the island of the sons of Uisneach." These words are from the account given by Samuel Ferguson, Esq., Q.C., in the "Dublin University Magazine," 1834. The following, with the Irish above, is from the version in the volume of the Gaelic Society of Dublin, 1808. We are left uncertain in this version whether Fergus came at once to the fort or the island; but it is hinted Naisi they might be from home, as it is said, "They had

three booths of chase—one for cooking in, one for sleeping in, and one for sitting in.”

“When Fergus came into the harbour, he sent out the shout of a mighty man of chase, and Naisi and Deirdri were sitting together, and the polished cabinet, that is the chess-board of Conor, was between them, and they were playing on it.” Here is a little picture which is at least that which, to the narrator, is probable as having taken place at the fort, or at the island of the sons of Uisneach. Booths might even have been built on the fort, but these would not be the hunting booths. Fergus is said to have come into the harbour—*innbhar* or *inver*. If that were more than a small inlet it would not suit the fort, much less if it were the mouth of a river; but probably the word is used, as we suppose the rest of the story to be told, with romantic looseness. *Inlet* would suit well the island, to be afterwards described. It is remarkable how little the writer of the prose shows of a knowledge of Scotland, whilst the poems go into detail; at least the lament does so, justifying Mr Skene's remark, that they may be of different and earlier origin. We have Deirdri and Naisi playing at chess; the game is introduced again on a more important occasion, and is not improbable for pretty early times.

It is often said that the Gael on both sides the Irish Channel were one people, but this story speaks of a difference in accent or intonation farther back than we might have expected.

Fergus uttered his shout, which could quite well be heard in the fort from the landing-place. Naisi called out, “I hear the voice of an Eirinn-aich” (or Irishman); but Deirdri said, “No, it is the voice of an Albanaich” (or Scotch Highlander). Fergus called again, and Naisi then insisted that it was an Irishman; but Deirdri, although she knew it was so, denied it. The other brothers knew the shout also. If we could believe this tale to be an exact account of the events of the time, a good deal would be decided, but we can only believe it to be true of the time in which it was composed—very old certainly. It establishes a different mode of speaking in the two countries at the period; unfortunately, the date of first writing is unknown.

The four persons returned against the wish of only one of them, namely, the lady. They seem to have been well established in Scotland, and to have acquired an important place of residence. Deirdri said, “It

is not meet for them to go thither, for greater is their rule in Alba than the rule of Conor in Erin." Conor was then the king of Ulster. Naisi said, "Dearer to me is Eiri than Alba, though more should I obtain in Alba than Eirin." Deirdri's love of Alba or Scotland is put into a song, and one which has wonderful power in it, expressing a longing for the land she has left. There is an admiration of natural beauty such as would fit the sentiments of every tourist in the west—not strained, but wild and simple. I shall only quote the verse relating to Loch Etive, as that district is the object of study at present.

"Glen Etive, oh, Glen Etive ! (Eitehe)  
There was raised my earliest home ;  
Beautiful its wood on rising,  
When the sun struck on Glen Etive."

This is Mr Skene's translation from the MS. in the Advocate's Library. This piece may be said to be the romance of the story of the sons of Uisneach and Deirdri. There is a third account, said by the Irish Gaelic Society to be the historic account, and there it is said the sons of Uisneach went to a wild part of Alba. This, in fact, the romance says by implication, and we have the hunting booths as well as the fort. These booths must have been put up in various places throughout Argyllshire, if the persons hunted in every glen mentioned in the song, and fished in the lakes. It is to be remarked, that the song mentions those very glens which we now admire—Glenmasson, Glendaruel, Glenorchy, Glen Etive. Glen Etive is still a very wild part, although at the extremity of that which we may call the glen, namely, including the loch and the whole long chasm of the Etive, there existed the fort spoken of, and probably a considerable population to whom it was interesting. The district was of sufficient importance to induce in later times the building of Dunstaffnage Castle and Ardchattan Priory. So wild are the banks of the upper loch, that none can travel over the whole who cannot walk about thirty miles on a rough road or wild mountain path. An Englishman has at length begun to build a large house in the valley. It is not quite certain that the meaning of Glen Etive was extended in the way spoken of, that is down to Connel, although a most natural way, but it is said the sun rose there on the woods ; to one at the westward, the sun

would always seem to be coming from the direction of upper Glen Etive in the morning.

The traditions are, that the beacons went up the side of Etive from Dun MacUisneachan at least up to Bunawe, as if the territory of the fort extended chiefly in that direction, and the hunting spoken of is chiefly towards the same, namely, Glenorchy, Glenmasson, &c. We may suppose that if the characters went there it was chiefly for hunting, although the love of the hills, the wilds, and the woods, was wonderfully developed. Naisi is said to have gone as far as Inverness on a fighting expedition. Glen Etive would be required for hunting and probably for protection, and there he might be supposed to rise in strength from the mere hunting booth to the strong fort. The name of Deirdri is still found there in *Grianan Dartheil*, the bower of Dartheil, or as Macpherson calls her, Darthula. This phrase is from the first Statistical Report of Scotland. Mr Skene gives the name *Suidhe Deardhuil*, the seat of Darthula, the nominative of *Deardhuil*, I suppose. But the residence was not confined to narrow glens.

Another song says, speaking of Alba—

“ Delightful the sight of her harbours and glens,  
Delightful to sit looking on her hills.”

This points to extensive vision such as would suit the fort, but not the booths up the loch. This is from the Gaelic Society's version, the date of which is not given.

At the risk of being thought rather inclined to introduce romance than actual scientific evidence, I have so far analysed the portions of story which bear directly on the district in question and its temporary inhabitants. I think it is done strictly, and as I have no theory to support, I have no object in twisting the meaning of anything. We are not told how long this family stayed at Loch Etive, but it was long enough according to the story, to give them power in the country, and long enough, as we know to a certainty, to have connected their name with the fort to this very day, notwithstanding the attempts of guide-books and histories to give it a Latin and foreign designation. It is a thoroughly isolated hill, and such was sought; I know of none so isolated around. It had command of the sea for flight, and the woods of



Glen Etive were a hunting ground rendered by nature inaccessible except to a few. At present the passage is made easier of access by the few steam yachts that, five or six times in a season, trouble its surface. There are many beautiful spots on which to sit looking at the bays, and valleys, and mountains, as Deirdri is said to have done; tradition may be supposed to have kept her habit in memory by speaking of the spot where she sat basking in the sun higher up the valley, but it can scarcely be said that we can see the harbours of Alba from them. The word *grianan* is really a sunny place, but I have called it bower after an authority in Joyce's "Names of Places." The name of Uisneach is perpetuated up the loch, where we may suppose the booths are said to have been, or at least one of the stations. There is a small island, five miles from Bunawe, called Eilean Uisneachan. Mr Skene gives Glen Uisneach. So thoroughly is the whole story forgotten there, that the people imagine the name to have been that of some saint. The name is a strong corroboration of the truth of the early links between Scotland and Ireland, were it required. There has been no modern theory to refresh the memory and coin the names. The principal hero is also remembered in *Caoille Naois*, or the wood of Naisi, the name at present of a farm, in Muckairn, and a wood around. These two latter I received from the Rev. D. M'Calman of Ardochattan, as well as from D. Clerk, Esq. of Oban. One of the versions of the story mentions Fergus going to a wood near to the house. The story of Deirdri and Naisi, with the other two sons of Uisneach, Ainle and Ardan, must not be confounded with the pure romance so abundant in Ireland and its manuscripts. We have the names definitely taking hold of the ground and occupying the forts. A mere romancer does not manage this unless he rises to such a height that he is held not unequal to the historian. I have used the fullest account published and known to me. O'Curry gives one much shorter and leaving out nearly all the Scottish incident as well as the most interesting song of regret. That learned Celtic scholar considers the story to have been written certainly as early as the year 1000, but probably as soon as 600. Mr Skene tells us that the MS. in the Advocate's Library bears the date of 1238.<sup>1</sup> The song of Deirdri is there the same in the Gaelic as that published in

<sup>1</sup> We may ask does this number really mean the date?

Dublin by the Gaelic Society, trifles excepted. The island is well known. It appears that the hunters, or at least the writers, enjoyed hunting in Glenorchy, Glenmasson, Glendaruel, &c., with a gusto that few men in their holidays from towns can feel. We may suppose they set up booths in these valleys. They did not merely hunt, they fished, and enjoyed the abundance and goodness of their food.

The people are from Ireland: there seems no sufficient reason for disturbing that point. There is a hill in Westmeath of the name of Uisneach or Usnagh. See Professor O'Curry's note to "The Fate of the Children of Tuireann." Mr Skene finds the names of the sons of Usnoth about Loch Ness, and the *flumen Nasæ*, with two forts called Deardhuil. A poem quoted shows that Naisi went to Inverness. Deirdri, or DARTHULA, was doubtless beautiful, and, like Queen Mary Stuart, may have left her memory in many places during a restless life. As Naisi is said to have had as much power as Conor of Ulster, he may have had a lake named after him. There is, however, a symptom of what might be imagined as Dalriadic feeling, if it had been later on: it may be caused by the writer's notions and ornaments. Naisi fights in the north, but hunts in the south. He has friends in the south, which may easily be accounted for by insertions made at any period from times after the supposed date. The intimacy is shown with the Crinan district, when Naisi is said to have admired a daughter of the Lord of Duntroon; and

"He sent her a frisking doe,  
A hind of the forest, and a fawn at its feet;  
And he passed to her on a visit  
On his return from the host of Inverness."

Until we learn more, we need not object to look on the early date of the events as probable enough, whilst the smaller details must be at least as old as the manuscript; the names may be of any age, and the kernel within tradition for the earliest writers. The story is one of "the three most sorrowful tales of Ireland," for the return was tragical. The other two tales differ entirely, surpassing bounds of possibility.

Concerning the connection between the Duntroon or Kilmartin district and that of Dun Mac Uisneachan on Loch Etive, I must refer to the description and drawing of an urn found in the cairn at Achnacree. I

showed it to a learned friend, and he, after some days, said that the nearest approach to it was in some Gibraltar urns. I then showed it to another, who said that it had a likeness chiefly to Eastern urns; but after a while he said perhaps the nearest are some of Gibraltar. Canon Greenwell, on the other hand, made the remark that he believes it is similar to those he found at Kilmartin, and that they are peculiar to these corners of Argyllshire. This is true of fig. 2, Plate XXIV., compared with one shown by Canon Greenwell. (See Vol. VI. Plate XX. p. 340 Proceedings.) Thus the two places are connected in this manner as well as by the poem quoted. Most persons will not suppose the urns to be so late as Dalriadic times in Scotland. Even this, however, although it would agree with general belief, is hard to make certain among a people who have used querns in this century and pottery as rude as the oldest, and whose grave-stones at present are ruder than the oldest stone cist known to us.

I said I had no theory; but if not, I have one object—which is to see whether vitrified forts can be brought into the sphere of history or even *dim tradition*. The names of the places already may be said to do both, and a well fitting tradition may be said to become a part of undisputed history. The record is, that the sons of Uisneach lived there; I believe we may add also on forts near Loch Ness, as well as in places not vitrified. The story seems to be such as we might readily expect; and whilst the names are certain, the acts are probable and natural, with few exaggerations as exceptions, and the time itself is not beyond the presumed power of oral record to do its work until the age of writing began. The other two sorrowful tales of Ireland are not so old, according to Professor O'Curry, in language, and yet they are wild beyond all belief,—fairy tales, in fact, never intended to be believed, and it is a misfortune to this one to have been in such company.

Professor O'Curry says that Conchobhar, the king of Ulster, is an undoubted historical character, and his descendants were recognised and identified till the Conquest, and can even be traced till the present day.

If we recognise the truth of the later days of Irish tradition, and extend our partial belief to some time before the introduction of writing, we have the forts spoken of inhabited, but not necessarily built, by these people. These may have used old haunts; but this argu-

ment is weakened by three being of the same kind; and we may even bring a fourth into connection, since there was one at Duntroon, a place also mentioned in the tale. This fort is well seen now in the woods, as shown me by Mr Mapleton: it is vitrified. No one gave his name to this fort at Loch Etive after the sons of Uisneach. We may, if we choose, imagine their period to mark the end of the occupation.

I have not succeeded in proving the age,—do not think I am quite so easily satisfied,—but I have given that which I have (with some repetitions) and made the ground ready for more. Little as it is, it took me some trouble, although of a pleasant kind.

Since writing the above I have received an account, written by Dr McLachlan, of a MS. of this story in the Advocates' Library. It begins by saying, "This story is highly interesting, as it unfolds the primary cause of the Tain Bho-Cuailgne (the cattle spoil of Cooley) or the disastrous septennial war between Conaught and Ulster, so famous in the ancient records of Ireland." He calls the lady Darthula. I have used the name in the Irish, namely, Deirdri. If the Scottish MSS. are left hidden from the public, we cannot expect to follow them. It would have been better to have compared the versions found there, they might guide us to the date of the version which I have used. I particularly wish to say, that in this matter of the Uisneach family, I am claiming nothing new; I merely put together facts already printed, so as to enable ourselves to give them emphasis and to draw conclusions. One of these I must not forget,—it is obvious enough (but it will still be disagreeable to lovers of Fingal's Selma). According to the given accounts, the Uisneach story ought to have been some three hundred years old in the time of Fingal, and yet the names are rooted in the ground. Had Fingal come and lived grandly at the fort, calling it Selma, the old name would soon have disappeared before one who seems to have appropriated so many sites to do him honour. Even in Macpherson's Darthula it is Usnoth that is associated with Eta or Etive, and the sun and woods of Loch Etive are mentioned with reference to his domains, not Fingal's. In Campbell's "West Highland Tales" there are references to other versions of the story, but I do not find it easy to obtain them all. The Uisneach family are the oldest heroes of Loch Etive, and their name lives on the ground, their history and romance in books.

*The Baron's Cairn.*—I must now leave Dun Macuisneach and go to another spot, which, although unconnected with any family name, is of a still later date. The Baron's Cairn was mentioned in the previous paper given last year, and a place near it was noticed called *Cuairt a' Bharan*, the court of the Baron. These are both on the moss of Connel or Ledaig. The court consists of the greater part of a circle, which has been made by throwing up the soil, at present about three feet high, thus making a ditch outside, now filling up with peat moss. In the middle of the circle nearly is a raised and elongated mound. The circle is not complete to the north-west, and opposite this opening is a large mound nearly as large as the circle itself, and higher than its banks or walls. The wall round the circle has no peat upon it, but only a little grass on the rough gravel. The mound inside the circle is entirely of peat 3 to 4 feet deep, or much more than the moss around. The inner mound has evidently been raised artificially, and the same may be said of the outer mound; it must have been raised by hand—peat could not, so far as I know, grow to such a height about the level of the neighbourhood. I imagined this to be the home of the Baron whose cairn was near, and therefore cut trenches in several directions in order to find traces of the homestead. But within the circle the level part is only grass on a thin soil, the peat having been removed to make the mound, with a little gravel sufficient to indicate this. There were really no remains of a house; and it appeared much rather as if a Thing or Scandinavian court had been there. And this I do not doubt. The name and the appearance alike point to it. The courts were not held close to towns. The elongated mound in the centre was in all probability a platform of security, as well as of dignity, for the court. The outer mound opposite the open part of the circle would suit well as a place for spectators. Indeed, some such place was absolutely necessary, where outside the wall there was only a ditch. This would account for all that we see. Extremely ancient, therefore, we cannot consider it; we must look to the Scandinavian times first probably, and to the introduction after that of the more southern institutions, and the court of the Baron.

When examining this court, I was told of another not far off, about midway between Connel and Ledaig. This was also examined by trenching, but nothing was found. Towards the sea, on the north-west, there is

as at the other court, a raised part. It would hold few people certainly, but the circle was small also. I suppose it was a very general thing, if not a rule, for these courts to be in secluded places. Protection was required for the officers. In the story of Burnt Njal, we see why that protection was required. A difference of opinion on an important point in the trial ended in a battle, and the death of about thirty people. Let us imagine a similar dispute to have taken place at the simple peat court on the shore of the small and shallow Loch-a-nan-Ragh on Ledaig Moss, and we can easily finish the quarrel by the death of the Baron, and have him buried under the cairn now called the Baron's Cairn, standing near the Baron's Court. This is, of course, a mere conjecture, but it is one in accordance with a very probable event, as well as the facts of the case as they now stand connected with traditionary names.

However, I judge this cairn to be not from prehistoric times, and, in all probability, from a comparatively modern era. Of course, one may say that the name of the court may have been transferred to the cairn, and if a very great deal depended on the matter, greater care would be required before concluding; but there is at present nothing hanging on the result, and I shall leave it with the belief that the traditionary name is correct until some positive reason, however small, shall be found to throw suspicion upon it. Tradition, we see, has much to boast of in this district, as the retention of ancient names shows.

It has been asked, why the courts were made round? We may also say, why were the circles made, instead of squares, &c.? Is it not a mark of early work? Children always build round at first: it is for want of a definite idea; they hasten to make the lines meet. Dr Livingstone could not prevent his Africans from making round walls. A straight line and an angle are exact ideas of later growth.

*Excavation of the Cairn of Ach-na-Cree.*—I must now describe a very different object, where history and tradition are unable to help us. In my paper of last year, a drawing was given of the large cairn at Ach-na-Cree (Ach-na-Cridhe), at least of the outside (see Plate IX.); since that time fuller details have been found.

Wishing to open the cairn in the wisest way, I requested Dr Stuart to fulfil a previous promise to visit the place, but the time did not suit; meantime I was preparing, and began to open from the top downwards.

It was desired not to disturb the actual top, so as to diminish the height, but it is to be feared that the care has not been sufficient. After the men had worked for seven days, a granite slab was found sixteen inches thick. Under one edge, there was some brittle slaty stone, which was easily removed, when an opening into a chamber was seen. After three more days the boulders of the cairn were taken down in quantity sufficient to render the slope safe enough to allow of an entrance. The great danger in these cases comes from the rolling of stones easily moved by a touch, and falling down to the bottom, so that they require to be lifted up at least as high as the side entrance. As it turned out, the hole under the granite roof was the only entrance that could have been used without endangering the structure. The intended entrance was then sought for. Two stones, that seemed to me to have been portions of a stone circle round the cairn, now showed themselves rather as gateposts, since the chamber seemed to point in that direction. An opening was therefore made between them, and a narrow passage found. This passage was made of brittle slate pieces of about 3 feet in height, and, in many instances, less than a foot broad, forming the sides, and covering the way. These did not seem in good order, as if the weight of the cairn had caused a tendency to collapse. The way was also nearly filled up with stones, put there with intention to make the entrance difficult, as it would seem. When working at this narrow entrance, an old man from the neighbourhood, who had been engaged to assist the others, said that he had found an opening there forty years ago, when removing stones for building. When General Campbell, who was then proprietor, saw this, he prevented further disturbance. There was no entrance made, but the opinion continued that the cairn was hollow. Evidently no one had entered it at that time. There was a story of some bones having been found, but I do not know at what spot; probably in a cist outside the cairn.

The apparent dimensions of the cairn are 75 feet in diameter, and 15 feet high. About a foot is now removed. If the pillar stones made a continuous circle at the same distance from the centre, the diameter would be less. At present the boulders of the cairn pass even that limit. It would be interesting to know if this circle supported the sides of the cairn. I incline to think not. Many of the stones have been removed on the side, so that one might doubt the shape of the original; but I think, from

the remaining part, that the whole was one great circle. On the side farthest from the road is a ditch, forming part of an outer circle of 135 feet in diameter. On the edge of that, again, there are some stones which appeared, when I first saw them, to be the remains of a stone cist rudely built, but so much displaced by the growth of trees, and other still later accidents which have entirely broken a part within a year, that it is not now easy to distinguish the form. We must consider, then, an enclosure about 400 feet in circumference, and within it, probably a dozen feet from it, a circle of standing stones. Of this I can find only one stone remaining; but it is so like a standing stone for the purpose, that it seems to have no other duty. I received this idea from those circles round the cairns at Clava, for example. An embankment is not uncommon; one is seen on a gigantic scale at the Giant's ring, near Belfast, where several acres are enclosed by a high earth wall; in the centre of the circle is a cromlech, with two covering stones, like one of those described at Ach-na-Cree-beag; one has fallen down on one side. Some of the supporting stones have been removed.

The next circle is the cairn itself, which was once no doubt much smoother and more regular than now, even if not supported all round by a wall of standing stones, like those now forming the entrance.

Before entering the cairn, I had the pleasure of a visit from the Rev. R. J. Mapleton of Duntroon, who kindly came with his great experience. This relieved me, as I do think inexperienced persons ought not to venture on touching ancient monuments, and I began with the full hope of finding help. Mr Mapleton has aided me in the description.

Fig. 1, Plate XXIII. gives the size and height according to the measurement of Mr Ritchie Rogers, who kindly undertook to survey the whole, both within and without. From him the originals of the drawings of this cairn have been obtained on a scale, and they are now enlarged to be shown.

[The inner circle shown on the diagram is that of the cairn itself. The dotted line is the original passage, now a good deal obstructed with loose stones, and not passable. The outer circle is that of the fosse. A supposed third circle would be between these two.¹]

A (fig. 2, Plate XXIII.) is the entrance, as seen from the chamber B, C chamber not marked. The point A is to the S.S.E., and may be called the southern point. In reality, however, we entered at L, where

¹ This diagram is not engraved.



a few of the loose stones at the top of the wall were removed. It was needful to go feet foremost, and to allow ourselves to drop gently to the floor.

[In the diagram shown at the Society's meeting, there was also a view of the side walls of the chamber and passages on the east and west.]

Fig. 2, Plate XXIII. gives plan and elevation of passages. Going from L we first meet passage I next to H, then E and D, with the stones of the wall over them always becoming smaller. We then come to A, where the proper entrance ought to be; these are placed in the plate opposite to their positions.

In a corner of chamber B, is a large boulder, probably put there from its having been ready at hand; at present it forms a part of the wall, although by jutting out it becomes an irregularity.

Having then entered feet foremost at L, the first thing that struck the eye was a row of quartz pebbles, larger than a walnut; these were arranged on the ledge of the lower granite block of the east side, with two on the west. When we looked into the dark chamber from the outside they shone as if illuminated, showing how clean they had remained. They are rounded and not broken. The total length of the chambers is nearly 20 feet, not including the long passage, and it may be said to be tripartite, although the centre part might be held to be merely a passage. The southern part, B, was intended to be entered first, and is the largest, 6 feet long and 4 wide, the height 7 feet, but diminished by an accumulation of 8 or 10 inches of soil. The entrance at A was capped by a large and roundish block of granite resting on two slabs, and leaving the doorway to be only 2 feet 2 inches high and the same wide. On the stones forming the passage no markings could be expected; they were rough and brittle and slaty; no markings could be seen even on the granite, although there were places convenient enough for the purpose. The walls were formed of two blocks rather than slabs of stone, supplemented alone by a rough walling, as seen in fig. 4. The slabs were placed on edge and lying end to end. On both sides where these two blocks met was a kind of triangular space filled in with loose open walling, so that the hand could be inserted between the stones. On thrusting the hand in, the place around seemed to be so open that Mr Mapleton was inclined to think that a recess might be behind. The roof was very interesting,

the stones of the rough walling rose from the rocks below, and gradually approached each other, until the space was only 3 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 10 inches. This was covered over by one stone, as depicted. The chamber was therefore roughly domed, in this respect resembling many buildings of later times. The soil was loose to the depth of 10 inches, chiefly fine gravel, with some larger pebbles. When Mr Mapleton lifted it up with a small trowel I passed it through my fingers; after bringing it to the light, many dark specks were found, appearing at first to be charcoal, but on examination they were found very soft, and might have been from decaying vegetable matter. It rained whilst we were in the cairn, and heavy drops came down into the domed room where the centre slab did not cover.

There was nothing found indicating a burial except the urns; in the large chamber was one, or rather part of one. There was no instrument of stone or of metal. We dug down to the natural surface, or some inches lower. However, the urn was not below the natural surface, but on it, and under the looser soil, lying on its side close to the mid part of the eastern wall. The position seems to have been its original one, the parts missing have probably decayed from being less completely burnt. The loose parts came out as if from their proper places, although detached. Another explanation is possible. The form is seen at fig. 1, small neatly raised portions forming incipient handles. The urn is round below, and consequently could not stand by itself. Earth and stones were the only contents. A pebble of the same size and quality as the white ones mentioned was inside, and had become brown like the earth around.

The markings have a neat appearance, although done by simply drawing a point down the side. See Plate XXIV. fig. 1.

The exit from this chamber leading to the middle compartment had two large slabs, supporting the roof or cover on the east side, resting on a wall of small stones, and on the west are the more solid blocks. The walling ran half way across the passage, which became narrowed to about 2 feet. This doorway E, was filled up with stones built firmly in after the chamber had been completed, and not supporting the structure. They had no appearance of having been placed there recently, although they were lighter in colour than those forming the upper part of the wall. Those in the passage had the same light colour, and were still of the

original building. I understand that the apparently premeditated filling up of a passage is not uncommon.

The middle part H, which may be only a passage itself, is 6 feet 6 inches long, and 2 feet 4 inches wide at the south end, and 2 feet 1 inch at the north. It is 5 feet 4 inches high. Both sides were very similar, each formed of two blocks, and above them 3 feet of firm dry walling. A stone was found lying across the compartment nearly hidden in the loose soil. This gave the idea of sub-compartments, such as had been found by Mr Mapleton at Kilmartin, but on examination it was seen to have been placed there only for strength, being large and irregular, and occupying a great part of the floor, although well fitted for keeping the sides from approaching.

The floor of the whole was strewed disorderly with boulder stones, but this I understand is common; to me it suggested entrance and robbing, whilst some careful hand closed all up. This, however, must have itself been early. The cover of this middle compartment was a large slab, the edges of which could not be seen.

The doorway I, into the north division, is 2 feet 9 inches. A long stone lay across, perhaps to tie the two sides, perhaps to support the ends of the covering slabs, or both. We suppose there were two slabs to this and the middle division, but we could not see the junction. This north compartment is 4 feet 6 inches long, 3 feet wide, and 4 feet 8 inches high, if we do not remove the loose soil, otherwise 5 feet 5 inches. This north end is formed by a slab, supplemented as elsewhere by rough walling. The east side was formed of two long slabs set on edge, the upper one resting on the lower. The space above has rough walling 1 foot 6 inches high. The west side was similar, except that the upper slab rather bent down and left a wider ledge. The lower slab was 1 foot 4 inches thick, and 1 foot 9 inches high.

About the middle of the ledge, on the east side, were placed six white pebbles of quartz—four in one part and two a little separate. On the west side were two white pebbles; others of the same kind, but discoloured, were found in the soil. Three pebbles were found in the urn on the east side, and one in the others, so far as the broken state allowed us to judge. One urn nearly entire was found on the west side, and above the ground on the east side were fragments of two which appeared to have crumbled to decay, although the appearance could be explained by their having been broken and parts removed. We may ask, why should people have removed por-

tions? The most complete was found exactly below the greatest number of quartz stones.

Fig. 2, Plate XXIV. shows the best preserved urn; it accompanied the fragments of two others. All seemed to have been round below, and to have had no feet; two of those in the north certainly, and the one in the south. Those in the north had no handles, not even incipient.

There was no injury done to any part of the structure, unless we except a crack in the tie stone between the north chamber and the passage. This was old, and seems to have been the result of weight only.

The quartz pebbles have been often noticed. Mr Mapleton has found them often in urns and cists; in one of the latter lately near Lochnell, and, he says, far from quartz. He adds, they are generally associated with cows' teeth. He found three angular pieces firmly imbedded in a deep cup cut out of the rock, and surrounded by rings or circle markings, on the rock in the Kilmartin district lately. These markings were covered over with about 15 inches of soil, in which no quartz occurred. Dr Wilson mentions twenty-five urns having been found in the Cathkin hills, each with its face downwards, and a quartz stone under it. Mr Mapleton inclines to consider a suggestion that the quartz pebbles were signs of acquittal, according to the custom of the Greeks of using white stones, shells, or beans, and refers to the second chapter and 17th verse of Revelation. There certainly we have the word used, *psephos*, a pebble, from which *psephidscmai*, I vote, is taken; votes were put into urns, and in Rome into cists. In Egypt stone tablets were put with the dead, but these were written on. We know that the Egyptians measured out the good deeds of the person who died. These ideas are interesting to keep in mind, but absolute proof we have not. We might, indeed, say that quartz pebbles, from their remarkable whiteness, are selected as beautiful objects out of the brown material generally forming the rocks or soil. Children are very fond of collecting them, and most families at the sea-shore have some. They are even seen in rows on window sills, and along garden walks, and at rockeries. The same idea of beauty might take hold of the national mind of an early age; this would explain to us why they are seen in so many positions, whether in Asia or with us. They often are found forming smaller circles within the stone circles and elsewhere. Still this does not contradict the idea of their being symbols, it may even assist it.

The ideas of childhood often become sacred in age. Perhaps the pebbles connect themselves with Greek and Egyptian customs. It is sometimes pleasant as well as useful to put together far-fetched ideas, and so I mention the Egyptian mode of burial described by Sir G. Wilkinson, where four urns were used. "The vase or urn, with a cover representing the human head of Amset, held the stomach and large intestines; that with the cynocephalus head of Hapi contained the small intestines; that belonging to the jackal-headed Smautf had the heart and lungs; and in the vase of the hawk-headed Kebhnsnof were the gall-bladder and the liver." If the intestines were put into the body again, the images of these four gods of Amenti were put beside them. It is in analogy with some other symbols if a quartz stone were to represent a divinity.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Wilson, when speaking of cairns, mentions Ledaig or Connel Moss, under the name of "the black moss," as containing many such heaps. But none there are so large as this now described. The others were externally of the same appearance as their ruins testify; but although large in circumference they do not seem to have been so carefully built, or to have had chambers. Perhaps they have not been sufficiently observed before ruin. The Baron's Cairn is one of the smallest, although it has a name, perhaps because latest. This of Achnacree has the name of Ossian's Cairn. I have not intended to keep that name, but it is necessary to record it. The reason for not using it is simply that there are so many claiming to be Ossian's.

This cairn might appear to belong to the neolithic or later stone age. Authorities, to whom I showed the drawings, agreed in this. Still we have obtained no implements, and this leaves a certain doubt behind how far the plan of building thrust itself forward into other ages in these remote places.

*Lake Dwelling.*—I shall now move back to the lake dwelling mentioned last year. It was my wish to examine it more fully, and accordingly I began a trench to follow the beams or trees which make the foundation. This led to a distance of 30 feet from the centre on the Ledaig Hill side, making the breadth 60 feet, although at the outer part

<sup>1</sup> In "Mysore," by Robert H. Elliott, vol. i. p. 62, it is said, "the only sign that denotes a demon-worshipping spot consists of three small stones, generally of white quartz."

the wood was not so plentifully used. At one spot was found a good deal of sand, about a foot broad, and a great many small branches. It pointed to the existence of an outer enclosure or yard. This, however, must be followed up. It will require a good deal of time, and I was able only to give a fortnight of the summer of last year. The size grew more important than expected, and the promise of some decisive objects increased. A large amount of nutshells were found, as if thrown into the yard in a slovenly way. A second fire-place was also found at the side of the door of the inner dwelling and within the yard. Several wooden pegs, and a piece of a knife not longer than a large pocket knife blade, a hook (such as might have been used for a pot, scarcely for fishing), several pieces of skin soles, and a slipper of thin skin, rather neatly made. Besides these, there was a part of a rim of a wooden basin well turned. These things do not point to a great distance of time, as already said, at least in this country, but I judge of the time more by the name of the place than the mode of building or the few objects hitherto found there.

*Loch Nell.*—Leaving this northern part of Lorn, and going to the southern side of Loch Etive, we come to Loch Nell, the Lake of Swans, as it is said to be, suggesting a spot either less inhabited than now, and therefore harbouring these birds quite wild, or what is also possible, a spot more inhabited where swans were admired and fed. But some one will laugh at wild Celts feeding swans and using Loch Nell like an ornamental pond. For this we have authority enough for the moment in “The Fate of the Children of Lin,” who were turned into swans, and fed as such, and swam for 300 years on the Loch of Derryvaragh, and for 300 years cold and wretched on the Mull of Cantire, &c., a romance wild enough certainly, but apparently old. The gathering of swans and enjoying their music are mentioned, showing that, whether true or not, the idea of beauty and music and swans were connected. The age of the story is not known, but although the MS. is not 200 years old, Professor O’Curry says, that he believes the tale to be old from the language.

This year, I went a little farther than last, and entered Glen Lonnen. Going through a very narrow pass we come to Cladh na MacRigh, pronounced Cleinamacry, which is called the burying-place of the king’s sons. The first object that calls our attention is on the roadside to the left

opposite the farm house of Cleinamacry. This is a mound with a small stone and a cross on each side cut into the stone. Under the cross on one side is a floral ornament in relief resting on a lengthened object. This is a good deal worn, whilst the crosses are sharply defined. These are seen at figs. 3 and 4, Plate XXIV. The mound seems to be partly natural and partly artificial, and is called simply *Cnoc na croise*, knowe of the cross. The mound and the cross suggest a semi-christian burial; but the latter, as I am told, may be of the fourteenth century, or later.

Up a little farther are several mounds. One is called *Cnoc an t' sagairt*, or knoll of the priest; another *Cnoc ant-sheomar*, or knoll of the chamber. These may be worth attention.

Farther south, and to the west of the road, is an elongated rectangular enclosure, very much decayed, and with signs of a circular mound round it 60 feet in diameter, but very low. This has an entrance at the easterly side. About half remains, and is about 30 feet long and 10 wide. I suppose this departure from the round form indicates a certain advance. There is no apparent reason for the circle in the case of an interment. This glen has a character different from the closely adjoining Loch Nell Valley, in thus presenting an elongated form. There seems to be a mixture of the old heathen and the Christian prehistoric customs. This is the true Cleinamacry, said by the people to be the place where infant children from Dunstaffnage Castle were buried.

Going up to the first turn of the valley we come to an isolated and steep height, standing almost like a ruined tower in the valley. On one side it is not perhaps more than 100 feet high, but towards the river more (having had my pocket aneroid stolen in a crowded hotel, I could not measure). This hill is simply called the Dun. Above, we see many loose stones, which no doubt formed a wall. It is said to have a fort in view on both sides, making one of a line. See fig. 9.

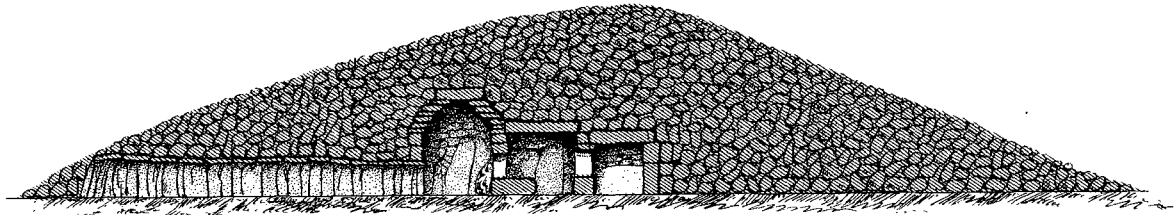
All this valley is lighted up with names of romance. The remarks on these are reserved for another paper, as additional names have since writing this been found.

I again call to mind that I am not a Celtic scholar, but I seek good advice for the few words written in Gaelic.

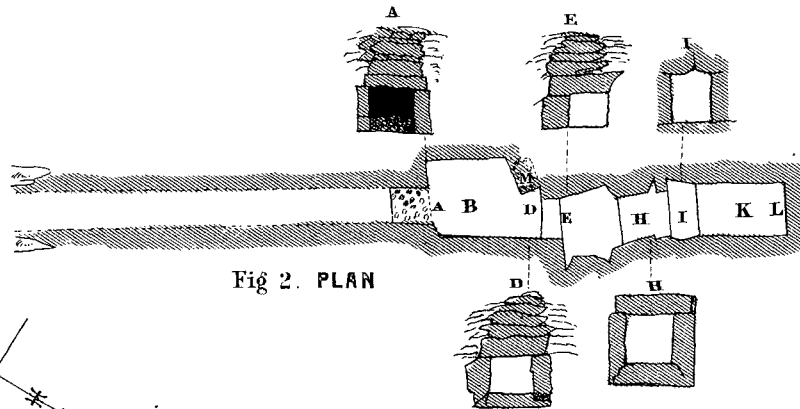
I have deliberately spelt the name of the fort in various ways, for reasons which may appear in a later paper.

*Cairn of Stones 75 feet diameter  
Stones lying on ground to 135 feet "*

*Scale to Section/  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20 feet*



**Fig 1. SECTION**

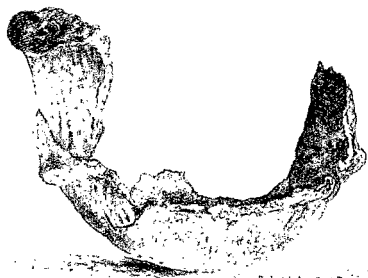


**Fig 2. PLAN**

*Scale to Plan/  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20 feet*

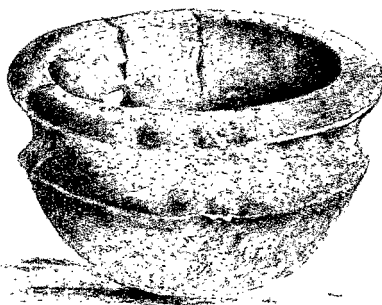


Fig 1

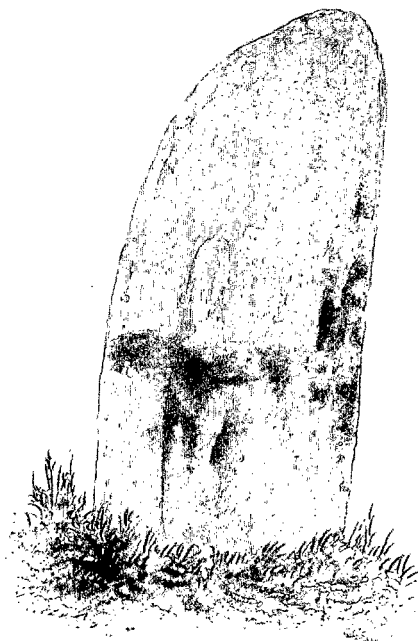
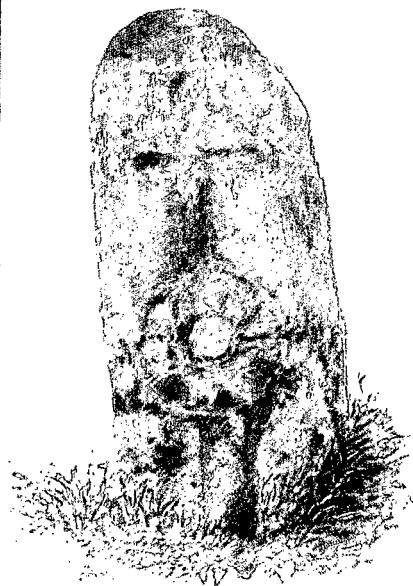


Urn from S. Chamber of Cairn Achnacree

Fig 2



Urn from N. Chamber of Cairn Achnacree



W & A. K. Johnston, Edinburgh.

CROSS AT CLEINAMACRY