

V.

STATEMENT RELATIVE TO THE RUTHWELL CROSS. BY GEORGE
SETON, M.A., ADVOCATE, F.S.A. SCOT.

A few weeks ago, along with a copy of his interesting little pamphlet on the Ruthwell Cross (published by Messrs Blackwood and Sons in 1885), I received the following letter from my friend Mr M'Farlan, minister of the parish of Ruthwell:—

THE MANSE, RUTHWELL,
2nd December 1886.

DEAR SIR,—You may have heard of our plan to have the Runic monument sheltered from the weather, in a building adjoining the old parish church here. I am almost afraid to write to an Edinburgh antiquarian on the subject, as so many of the members of your Society are of opinion that the "Cross" should be sent to their care in the Edinburgh Museum. I will cling to the hope, however, that some of them will yet smile upon our plan; and, knowing the interest which you take in the monument, I will be greatly obliged if you will bring the following facts under the notice of the members of your Society, or of any of your friends who may be able to look with favour on the local preservation of the Ruthwell Cross.

The plan is to have the Cross placed in a semicircular building at the back of the present pulpit, lit by four lancet windows. This would attach it definitely to the parish church, and would overcome the difficulty of having a new building erected over the monument where it now stands. Neither the heritors nor the

minister could be held responsible for the up-keep of such a building. The heritors have sanctioned the present plan, and H.M. Office of Works has agreed to give £50 towards it if the whole of the sum required—viz., £250—be forthcoming within six months from the 1st of December. Counting the Government grant, we have £204 in all subscribed, and we are now appealing to the friends of the Cross to help us in completing the needed amount.—Sincerely yours,

J. M'FARLAN.

In reply, I undertook to make a short statement to the Society relative to the proposal; and I have recently received a second letter from Mr M'Farlan, along with two Dumfries newspapers containing paragraphs which indicate the local opinion regarding the treatment of the Cross. "Since I wrote to you (Mr M'Farlan says) I have a letter from the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, London, stating that they intend to support our plan. We still need about £20. Our farmers have little to spare at present, but I have no doubt they will come to the rescue if there is any fear of our losing the promised grant of £50 from H.M. Board of Works. However, apart from the matter of a donation from your Society, I am specially anxious to have their general approval for the local preservation of the monument."

After stating that it is "manifestly impossible for the heritors and minister of Ruthwell to sanction the removal of the Cross to Edinburgh," Mr M'Farlan offered to transmit, for the inspection of the Society, the architect's plans for the proposed addition to the church and for the removal of the Cross, besides indicating his willingness to come to Edinburgh for the purpose of personally expounding them. The "plan (he adds) is, I believe, pretty well known to the members of your Society. Still I am anxious that the Scottish antiquaries should have an opportunity of discussing it; and I would not like to carry out a plan which they might afterwards set down as a blunder." I accordingly requested Mr M'Farlan to send me the plans (which I now exhibit), but I did not consider it necessary to ask him to come to Edinburgh.¹ The scheme has now been formally approved of by the Presbytery of Annan.

It is quite unnecessary for me to trouble the Society with any

¹ In point of fact, however, Mr M'Farlan attended the meeting at which this paper was read, and made an explanatory statement.

detailed account of the deeply interesting monument to which my communication refers. Suffice it to state that the date of its erection was somewhere about the year 680—*i.e.*, upwards of 1200 years ago; that, according to tradition, the Cross originally stood at Priestside, on the Solway shore, from which it was removed to its present locality by a team of oxen, or by the angels; that it was thrown down during the ecclesiastical troubles in the reign of Charles I., about the year 1642, the broken fragments having been allowed to remain within the parish church for upwards of 130 years; that in 1802 the Rev. Dr. Duncan, minister of Ruthwell, found the fragments lying *outside* the church, and set up the two principal parts in the manse grounds; the erection of the pillar, as it now stands, with new cross beam and old top stone, having been completed by Dr Duncan in 1823. The Cross is referred to by Bishop Gibson, in his additions to Camden's *Britannia*, published in 1695; and at different dates, during the eighteenth century, by Dr Nicolson, bishop of Carlisle, Alexander Gordon, in his *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, Thomas Pennant, in his *Second Tour in Scotland*, and Cardonnel and Gough, in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, issued by the London Society of Antiquaries. During the current century the history of the Cross has been ably discussed and illustrated by a number of distinguished scholars and archæologists, including Dr Duncan, Mr Kemble (the celebrated Anglo-Saxon scholar), Dr Daniel Wilson, the Rev. D. H. Haigh, Professor Stephens of Copenhagen, Dr John Stuart, Mr Henry Sweet of Oxford, and Dr Joseph Anderson, in whose *Scotland in Early Christian Times* (2nd series) will be found an interesting account of the Cross, accompanied by several admirable illustrations.

I have reason to believe that very conflicting opinions are entertained by the Fellows of this Society regarding the point at issue. While some warmly support the views of the heritors and minister of Ruthwell—which I understand are shared by the entire population of Dumfries and Galloway—others no less strongly advocate the removal of the Cross to the Edinburgh Museum of National Antiquities, in the interests of the public and also of archæology; and that mainly on the ground that any local claim to the retention of the monument has long ago been forfeited by the treatment which it has received at the hands of those who

ought to have religiously protected it. To use the language of Dr Anderson :—"Look at its pitiable story. Demolished, broken, buried ; restored and reconstructed by private enterprise ; deciphered and demonstrated to be of national interest and importance as a literary and historic monument,—and yet left to weather and decay ! Had it been covered with Asian bilinguals or African hieroglyphics, it might at least have had the chance of being acquired at great expense and brought to this country in triumph, with much public rejoicing over its acquisition."

In other matters besides those pertaining to archæology the rival claims of local and central control have given rise to many a warm discussion. Speaking generally, there is probably a good deal to be said on both sides. In some instances it appears to be very desirable that local opinion and local action should be entirely unfettered ; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that a little gentle despotism, in the shape of central supervision, is occasionally very wholesome. Take the case of the concentration of the Old Parochial Registers of Scotland, in terms of Lord Elcho's Act of 1854. I venture to think that no impartial person of ordinary intelligence can hesitate to admit that, on the whole, the safe and proper custody of these important records in a central department is a great national boon. With regard to archæology, I am disposed to hold that coins and other articles of treasure trove, which are usually not very bulky, ought invariably to find their way to our National Museum. The same principle would, of course, equally apply to every other class of antiquities of moderate size ; but when we come to deal with an object in sandstone, measuring about 18 feet in height, 2 feet in breadth, and 15 inches in thickness, and weighing probably about three tons, there appears to be some ground for challenging the propriety of its removal, more especially if it can be shown that henceforth every reasonable precaution will be adopted to protect the precious memorial from injury or decay. As already indicated, I have brought the subject under the notice of the Society, at the request of the minister of Ruthwell, with the view of enlisting its sympathy, if not its aid, in the retention of the unique monument in the picturesque parish of Annandale from which it takes its name.

MONDAY, 14th March 1887.

DR ARTHUR MITCHELL, C.B., in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were duly elected Fellows :—

ANDREW AIKMAN, 27 Buckingham Terrace.

WILLIAM MAXWELL of Donavoured, Pitlochry.

WILLIAM S. THOMSON SINCLAIR, Dunbeath Castle, Caithness.

The following Donations to the Museum and Library were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the Donors :—

(1) By Miss DUDGEON, through PATRICK DUDGEON, F.S.A. Scot.

Maori Axe of jade, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by 2 inches in width, finely polished, and having a small perforation at one end, from New Zealand.

(2) By J. STUART ROBERTSON of Edradynate, F.S.A. Scot.

Maori Adze of obsidian, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth and 2 inches in thickness, shaped by rough chipping only, from Pareora, South Canterbury, New Zealand.

Maori Adze of the same stone, 9 inches in length, 2 inches in width across the back, and triangular in the cross section, with the apex of the triangle to the front.

The Donor communicates the following notice of the circumstances in which they were found :—“These two stone implements must have been made and used by the Maories. They were found on the Pareora Estate, South Canterbury, which belongs to the New Zealand and Australian Land Company. They were given to Mr Macpherson, manager of Pareora, by the man who had found them whilst engaged in ploughing up the native tussock, in order that the land might be laid down in English grass. The implements must have been very near the surface, as in ploughing tussock country for the first time only a three-inch-deep furrow is turned up. The stone of which they are made is

supposed to have come from a quarry near the Cold Lakes, in the centre of the New Zealand Alps. The Maories in the Middle Island do not now number many more than a thousand."

(3) By R. CARFRAE, F.S.A. Scot.

Urn, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide at the mouth, with everted lip and bulging sides, irregularly ornamented with impressed dots in a zigzag pattern, found in a cist at Tartraven, Linlithgowshire, about twenty-five years ago.

(4) By W. IVISON MACADAM, F.S.A. Scot.

Two leaf-shaped Arrow-Heads of flint, from the Island of Arran.

Pot Quern of sandstone, from Glenkill, Lamlash, Arran, measuring 12 inches diameter, and standing 6 inches high, with three projections $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length on the bottom as feet; the hollow on the top is 10 inches diameter and 2 inches deep, with a central hole for the spindle, and a side hole penetrating in a slanting direction to the outside.

Three Arrow-Heads of quartzite, from Nebraska, United States of America.

(5) By JAMES CHISHOLM, F.S.A. Scot.

Ornamental Door-Sneek of wrought iron.

Carved Wooden Implement, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, with knobbed handle, and short, thick, flat, spud-like termination, use unknown.

(6) By PETER MILLER, F.S.A. Scot.

Three Arrow-Heads of chert, from Merigomish Harbour, Nova Scotia.
(See the subsequent communication by Mr Miller.)

(7) By Rev. DAVID SCOTT, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church. 8vo. 1886.

(8) By Professor F. J. CHILD, the Author, through W. MACMATH, F.S.A. Scot.

English and Scotch Ballads. Part IV. 4to. Boston, 1886.

(9) By EDWIN LAURENCE, the Author.

Progress of a Century, or the Age of Iron and Steam. 4to. London, 1886.

(10) By GEORGE WILLIAMSON, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Old Greenock, from the Earliest Times to the early Part of the Nineteenth Century, with some Account of the Burgh of Cartsburn and Burgh of Barony of Crawford's Dyke. With Illustrations. 4to. 1886.

(11) By HERBERT J. REID, the Author.

The History of Margrave, Berks, with the Legend of Queen Emma, and an Account of the Ancient Monuments in the Parish Church, &c. 8vo. Reading, 1885.

(12) By C. ROACH SMITH, Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot., the Author.

Retrospections, Social and Archæological. Vol. II. 8vo. London, 1886.

There were also Exhibited :—

(1) By J. MAXTONE-GRAHAM of Cultoquhey, F.S.A. Scot.

Badge in silver of King Charles II., having the king's portrait in relief enclosed in a small heart-shaped box ornamented with emblematical devices, and inscribed with loyal mottoes, said to have been found at Philiphaugh. Along with it were two facsimiles. It is described in *The Rivers of Scotland*, by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder (p. 99), as a portrait of Montrose, but the portrait is that figured in the *Medallic Illustrations of British History*, published by the British Museum, vol. i. p. 437, and the mottoes are those of the Badge No. 249, p. 366, of the same volume.

Large silver heart-shaped Brooch, similar to those called Luckenbooth Brooches.

Bronze Sword of very peculiar form, but precisely similar to a much larger one in the Museum, which is believed to be an Irish forgery.

- (2) BY ALASDAIR STUART ROBERTSON of Struan, through Sir NOEL PATON, F.S.A. Scot.

The "Clach-na-bratach," or Talismanic Amulet of the Chiefs of Clan Donachaidh, a ball of rock-crystal, in a silk bag made for it some generations back by a lady of the Breadalbane family. (See the subsequent communication by Sir Noel Paton.)

- (3) By Rev. GEORGE R. BUICK, Culleybackey, County Antrim.

Four Flint Implements of peculiar form, apparently intended for use in a particular manner as knives. These implements of flint, which are much more common in Ireland than in Scotland, have a special bearing on a very interesting question, which is thus referred to by the Rev. Mr Buick in a letter to Dr Anderson transmitting the specimens for exhibition :—

May I trouble you about a matter which has been suggested to me by reading your book on *Scotland in Pagan Times—the Stone and Bronze Ages?* You figure three articles from the chambered cairn of Ormiegill, Caithness. The middle one of the three you call an arrow-head. Evans figures the same one, I believe, and calls it a single-winged arrow-head. I am inclined, however, to think it is a knife. In this neighbourhood we get a series of flint articles of a similar shape (if one can judge rightly from engravings), which are undoubtedly knives. I take the liberty of sending you a few in a box by post, in the hope that you will examine them, and say if the article you found at Ormiegill resembles them. If it does, then the fact would go to prove this particular species of flint knife preceded the bronze and iron blades of a similar shape. The ordinary knife of the shoemaker in this district is almost identical in shape, and some antiquaries hold that the flint ones are imitations of metal implements introduced before the age of stone finally passed away. I myself think otherwise. With the specimens which I have (over 200) I can easily trace the development. An ordinary leaf-shaped flake was first employed for cutting. This, however, would be awkward in the hand, more especially in cutting such a tough material as hide. Pressure would require to be applied, and in applying this pressure the edge unemployed would be almost certain to injure the hand. To meet this difficulty, a small portion was chipped off the edge near the point. On the part so deprived of its sharpness the fore finger could rest with safety, and the needed pressure be applied. The next step seems to have been the chipping away of the entire edge, by which all source of danger was removed. Afterwards, a tang was fashioned at the butt end of the flake so treated, and the blade

inserted in its handle of wood or bone. In this way a knife was obtained which had a good strong back and at the same time a very sharp edge formed by the natural fracture of the flint. Such a knife would be far superior in cutting power to one the edge of which had been formed by chipping. Indeed, in some specimens which had been much used, the edge has been re-formed by being chipped. I may add, that in some instances the tang is flat and thin, whilst in others it is round and strong. Two specimens which I possess are between four and five inches long. In both the tang is round.

(4) By R. B. Æ. MACLEOD, Esq. of Cadboll, Invergordon Castle.

Polished Celt, found in the parish of Fearn, Ross-shire, in 1863.

Three Stone Celts, obtained at Pitcairn's Island by the exhibitor in 1848 from the inhabitants. When compared with the British specimens, they show the resemblance which exists between the stone implements of areas so widely separated, while at the same time presenting very marked differences of character.

Sketch of Rock Sculpture near the shore, Rope Bay, Pitcairn's Island. Sketched by Dr J. J. L. Donnet, R.N., of H.M.S. "Calypso," 1848.

Stone Adze, fixed into its original handle by the natives of the Fiji Islands, and which they used in building their double canoes, capable of holding 100 men; obtained there in 1848.

Pair of Straps woven with a pattern in colours; and a pair of plaited Slings, from the tombs at Pachacamac, in Peru, 1847.

Drawing of a "Huacho," or Vase, from the same place, exhibiting a style of decoration with a strong resemblance to Egyptian.

(5) By JAMES TAIT, Gattonside, Melrose.

Small oval Seal of brass, with loop at the back, the face engraved with the Virgin crowned, having the Child in her left arm; underneath, a monk in adoration, and round the margin the inscription CULPIS HELIE PARCITO XPE P, apparently for CULPIS ELIE PARCITO CHRISTE PRECOR. The seal measures $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length by $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in breadth, and is of much interest as a personal seal, apparently of a monk of Melrose of thirteenth century.