

III.

NOTE OF A GOLD BROOCH OF THE 13TH OR 14TH CENTURY, FOUND
IN THE WATER OF ARDOCH, NEAR DOUNE CASTLE. BY REV. J.
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The brooch that I have now the privilege of submitting to the notice of the Society was only recently placed in my hands. I regret that my

¹ Antiq. of Aberdeen and Banff, vol. iv. p. 451 — *Dauachyndore* is another form of the name. It appears to mean the *davoch* among *hillocks*, or the *hillock-davoch*. The place abounds in knolls.

knowledge of such works of art is so exceedingly limited that I feel unable either to point out its peculiar artistic merits, or to speak with confidence as to its probable age. I exhibit it rather in the hope that some one, possessed of greater skill, may possibly throw light upon these points, than under the idea that I have myself much that is interesting to communicate.

Its history—so far as known to me, or to its owner, my friend, Mr Wilson Struthers of Oaklea House, Hamilton—is briefly this:—About forty years ago, while Mr Struthers was on a visit to the works at Deanston, in Kilmadock parish, Perthshire, then belonging to his uncle, the late Kirkman Finlay, Esq., M.P. for Glasgow, he came upon some boys who were, as it is locally termed, “guddling” or groping for trouts, beneath the slightly projecting banks of Ardoch burn, some few hundred yards above its junction with the Teith. In the course of this exciting boyish pastime, a large trout having been started, was pursued along the stream, from bank to stump, and from pool to shallow, till at last it seemed to find a resting-place beside a massive travelled stone, near to the point where the burn skirts the eastern flank of the ancient castle of Doune. By the help of such engineering skill as was readily at hand, the stone was cautiously turned over; when, to the manifest disappointment, for the time, of the adventurous youths, one of them found in his grasp, instead of the glassy speckled trout, what appeared to be merely an old buckle or a piece of ancient coffin mounting! Though at first despised and thrown away, this was afterwards picked up and carried home by one of the boys. Upon its being cleaned, and ascertained to be of pure gold and curiously wrought, it was ultimately purchased by its present owner, at such price as the district jeweller might put upon it, and has remained in his hands ever since.

The workmanship, I am informed by skilled tradesmen, is well executed and manifestly ancient. The pin is fixed in much the same way as in those that are sometimes called Celtic or witch brooches. The twisted form of the rim is somewhat similar to what is seen in some ancient armlets that are now in the Museum. The inscription, which is in mediæval church lettering, and in the old French language, is all on one side of the brooch, in eight lines, on the short smooth portions of

the diagonal twists, and commences immediately to the right of the pin hinge. It is as follows :—

+ abe!
 de + moy
 mercie
 + + pite
 mouu
 coer
 en + vous
 repose

The gold I understand has been tested, and is said to be almost entirely free of alloy. Its weight is $19\frac{1}{2}$ dwt., in which there may be perhaps 2 grs. of baser metal. It seems doubtful whether the lettering had at one time been coloured.

With regard to the history of the brooch previous to the date that has been indicated, we are left very much to conjecture. From the style of workmanship and the inscription, as well as from its type, it seems possible that its makers lived in the 13th or 14th century; but it is equally possible, and not less probable, that they flourished towards the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. The words of the inscription point to a pre-Reformation period; and a minute examination of the workmanship has satisfied skilled people that it is not a modern antique of later times; although at the date of its fabrication it may possibly have been made after an earlier fashion.

It may be mentioned that at the place where it was found, there is understood to have been at one time a ford, and perhaps also stepping-stones, by which access was obtainable to the precincts of the ancient castle; and that while a ready passage was thus secured for the inmates and retainers, the castle itself was more than once assailed from that quarter by plaided foemen. It is no very extravagant conjecture, that the brooch had belonged to some one of the many illustrious chieftains, who—from the times of the ancient Earls of Monteith, of the royal Dukes of Albany, or of Henry VIII.'s sister, the widowed queen of James IV. and her numerous suitors, down to the days of the young chevalier and the redoubtable Stewart of Balloch—had either paid their court to the

occupants of the castle, helped to defend or to assail it, or had, perhaps, like the reverend author of "Douglas," succeeded by ingenious contrivance in getting out of it. If the brooch be presumed to have been worn for the purpose of fastening the folds of the plaid, or by way of ornament attached to the sash upon the shoulder or breast, it could scarcely, from its peculiar construction, have been *lost* by the *wearer*; except in the event of the cloth being forcibly cut away, or else through the plaid or sash, or whatever portion of the dress it was attached to, being torn off. In either of these contingencies, upon the less durable material perishing, it can be conceived that the weighty gold might remain but little disturbed in the channel of the stream for centuries, either where it was found, or slowly pushed along by the winter floods, until some such accident as has been mentioned brought it to view.