

III.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF SOME ANCIENT ARMS AND ARMOUR,
NEAR GLENFRUIN, ON THE ESTATE OF SIR JAMES COLQUHOUN OF
LUSS, BARONET. BY HOPE J. STEWART, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

“The district of Luss, comprehending Glendouglas, Glenluss, and Glenfroom or Glenfruin, lying on the banks of Lochlomond, while justly famed for the beauty and variety of its scenery, is not without interest to the archæologist. Within the short space of eight or ten miles, the remains or sites of four old towers and two chapels can be seen, viz., the Castle of Banochar or Baunachra, near the opening of Glenfruin; the tower of Rossdhu and its ancient roofless chapel, close to the modern mansion; the stronghold of Galbraith, a noted free-booter, on Inchgalbraith; the Dun, or fort, near the centre of Glenluss; and in the same glen, at a spot called Tom Glas, the ruins of a chapel.”

Mr Stewart alluded to various traditions still related by the old men of the district, which were interesting as illustrating the manners and customs of the people in past times, as well as connected with the Celtic origin of the descriptive names borne by the various places around. He alluded to the name of *Ald á Chlaidheimh*, *i. e.*, the “Burn of the Sword,” now written Aldochlay, borne by a mountain streamlet near Camstraddan House, which tradition states

to be derived from the inhabitants of the district piling up their swords on its banks before entering the church which formerly stood there, and thus preventing strife and bloodshed. Mr Stewart also referred to the *Stuick an Strigh*, or "Rock of Strife," in the immediate neighbourhood, indeed on the hillside above, which was the scene of a combat, ending in the death of a shepherd of Colquhoun of Luss, with a shepherd of Colquhoun of Camstraddan, who himself, indeed, made common cause with his retainer; and the strife was terminated by Camstraddan taking the dissevered head of the murdered man and tossing it into the castle-yard of his master, with whom he was at feud. He also noticed some of the other names as descriptive in their character,—as *Rossdhu*, the "Black point;" *Rossarden*, the "Point of the height or hillock;" *Inchtavannach*, *Innistigh Mhanaich*, the "Island of the Monk's House" or Monastery.

Mr Stewart then alluded to the Hill of Dumfin, situated close to the upper bridge over the River Froom, and nearly opposite to the old and shattered tower of Baunachra, which derives its name, Dunfion, Dumfin, "Fingal's Hill" or Fortress, from a tradition connecting it with that celebrated Celtic hero. It is an elongated, conical elevation, divided into two peaks, one of which is considerably higher than the other, and both bear evident marks of having once been fortified, a deep and broad trench or fosse surrounding each of them. It was at the foot of this hill, and in the immediate neighbourhood, that the weapons and pieces of defensive armour, sketches of which (drawn in water-colour by Mr Stewart) were exhibited and presented to the Society, had been discovered at three different periods and places, but all within a mile or a mile and a half of each other. The first, a peaked helmet, was found many years ago by the late Mr James Bain, tenant of the farm of Dumfin (the property of Sir James Colquhoun), when rambling along the banks of the River Froom, at the edge of the stream, jammed into a crevice of the rock. From its form, this may be the fragment of a morion with the rim corroded away, or the old Highland helmet called Clogaide, which had no rim. It is studded round the edge with brass, the studs being ornamented with small lines converging to their apex, and has been much rent and broken on one side, being indeed quite split up.

"The celebrated clan-battle of Glenfroom or Glenfruin (*i. e.*, the Glen of Sorrow), between the Colquhouns and the Macgregors, and in which the latter were victorious, was fought A.D. 1602, on the banks of the stream on which this relic was discovered, but about four miles higher up the glen, along the line of the old road which led to the north Highlands, before the present line by the banks of Lochlomond was formed. This ancient path is still called the 'Highlandman's road,' and can be distinctly traced at various points,—near Dumfin and through Glenfruin. It is probable that the helmet had been

carried down by the force of the stream from the field of battle, and found temporary resting-place in the crevice of the rocky channel.¹

“Another helmet and spear-head, with other fragments of armour, were also discovered by Mr Bain in the year 1836, in the old channel of the river, now forming part of a level field called ‘Blar chean,’ or ‘Field of the Head,’ on the north-west side of Fingal’s Hill, immediately below the Bridge of Froon, on the Helensburgh road. This second helmet is a knight’s or trooper’s helmet of the time at which the forementioned battle was fought; it is large and handsome, and has the visor still attached to it, but the rivet has given way on one side, while on the other it is sufficiently firm to admit of its being moved up and down. It was observed to have been lined with coarse linen cloth, what weavers call ‘woven on a 600 reed.’ The remaining fragment is the gorget part of a helmet, corresponding in form to the one described, in all probability belonging to it, as this part of the helmet is defective.

“The spear-head found near the same spot presents quite a contrast to the helmet, as it is formed of bronze, and belongs to a much earlier period. It corresponds in shape and character with several so-called *Celtic* weapons preserved in the Society’s Museum, although it is more slender, being $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and 1 inch in greatest breadth of blade, and has two loops for securing it to the shaft.

“In regard to the other iron relics, which belong, in all probability, to a period long anterior to those just described, with the exception, of course, of the looped spear-head of bronze, they were discovered under the following circumstances:—During the month of April 1851, Peter Cairns, the forester of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, was engaged, along with some workmen, in transplanting a tree, and when digging a hole for its roots in its new situation on the top of a mound called Boiden, about a gun-shot from the lower Bridge of Froon, and where a large cairn formerly stood, 40 feet to the west of the forester’s house, and 2 feet below the surface, they came upon a cross-handled sword, a large spear-head, and an iron or steel cup-like vessel, all lying together within a space of $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 feet square.

“The sword is much bent, and half eaten through in more than one place by rust; the guard is cross; and the hilt, as in most Celtic weapons, somewhat flat, and not suited for a large hand, the bar at the end of the hilt being nearly equal in size to the guard; and the blade is very broad and flat.² It is of the following dimensions:—Total length, 2 feet 11 inches; length of blade, 2 feet 6 inches; greatest breadth of blade, 2^o inches. The iron spear-head measures 11 inches in length; greatest breadth, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

¹ On account of this battle, letters of fire and sword were issued by James VI. against the clan Gregor. See *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iv., p. 153.

² In the Museum are specimens of nearly the same form, and found under similar circumstances.

“The cup-like vessel appears to be the boss of a shield. Its diameter is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and height 2 inches. It has a broad rim, now partially broken away.

“From the situation in which these last described relics were found, viz., near the top of the mound, and covered as they had formerly been by a very large cairn, we have every reason for believing they had belonged to some mighty chief of old, whose remains had found their last resting-place here, beneath the gray cairn.”