

## I.

### ON THE ANCIENT SCULPTURED MONUMENT DISCOVERED AT ST ANDREWS, IN 1833. BY GEORGE BUIST, LL.D., F.R.S.E., F.S.A. SCOT.

The Cathedral of St Andrews, it will be remembered, was founded in 1189, finished in 1318, and destroyed by the Reformers in 1559. From this period until 1826 the rubbish of its ruined roof and walls lay piled upon its foundations and its floor to the thickness of many feet. The mass seems to have been ransacked over and over again, for the sake of the building stones contained in it; and in half the houses of St Andrews built within the next 150 years, fragments of the cathedral will be found. When, in 1826, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests had the remaining material cleared away, scarcely a stone of any size was found to be contained in it, the wonder being that the floor and tombstones of the clergy should have been left as they were, untouched. In 1833 a grave was dug deeper than the foundations of the cathedral itself, and 6 or 8 feet lower than the floor, and here the first fragments of the sarcophagus were found. On their character being explained to the Rev. Mr Lyon, by whom a very faithful drawing of the principal panel had been made, a separate search was instituted, and some farther fragments discovered; and it is more than probable that, had pains enough been taken, the whole would have been brought to light. But, so lightly were these priceless relics prized at the seat of the oldest University in Scotland, that for six years they lay tumbling about as if of no interest or consequence to any one whatever, the Rev. Dr Dibdin having been permitted to carry some fragments of them away to obtain illustrations for his book, in which some drawings of them appear. In 1837 I placed Mr Lyon's drawing in the hands of Dr Craik, and an engraving of it appears in the third volume of the Pictorial History of England; and in 1839, when in charge of the Cupar-Fife Museum, I had casts of it made, and set up as a coffin, in the form in which it had obviously originally stood, the place of the

missing pieces being supplied by duplicate casts of those existing, the substitution being noted. From the elaborate style of the sculpture, it is quite clear that it was originally intended for exhibition above ground, being in all likelihood placed upon a pedestal, and surmounted by a decorated cover; and from the fact of its being found in detached fragments many feet under what had been the surface of the ground when the cathedral was built, it is clear that all reverence had ceased to be attached to it by the middle of the twelfth century at latest,—the same being the case with many of the sculptured crosses, one of which is built into the church-wall of St Vigeans, a structure said to be nearly six centuries old, and into that of the church at Fordoun, not of very greatly less antiquity. In those days everything to which people had previously attached any considerable degree of reverence was forced into the service of the church, and

“Pan to Moses lent his pagan horn,”

symbolically, at all events, in every quarter of the country. From these circumstances, but much more especially from the conflicting and absurd accounts given of these sculptures by our earlier historians, it is quite clear that in those days tradition had long been silent regarding them, and that no more was known of them in the twelfth century than at the present time. Yet monuments, of which there are still nearly 200 in existence, and of which probably double this number was then in being, to be found in half dozens in every one of the eastern counties from Fife to Caithness, both included, must have held no small place in public estimation for very many years, as their original erection must have owned a common origin, and been the result of a feeling or fashion of very general prevalence amongst the people, when such things were propagated at a tardy pace indeed. If we assume, as we may fairly do, the whole circumstances connected with them, and the veneration accorded to them, to have been forgotten by the twelfth century, we may fairly assume that they could not have come into existence later than the tenth; and this carries us back to one of the most dark, barbarous, and benighted periods of our history, when science, literature, and the arts, seemed to have been alike disregarded in Scotland. Nor are we permitted to pause even here, if it can be made probable that the class of monuments to which the St Andrews' sarcophagus belongs could not have been brought into existence later than the tenth century, we are thrown back on a period of savage darkness and bewilderment, whose recesses extend back to before the commencement of the Christian era. The utmost attempt at religious or monumental structure made during the Druidical period consists of rows, circles, or single pieces of huge unhewn stones, indicative of the utter absence of anything approaching to taste, skill, or art;

and, with the exception of the Round towers, of whose history we are as ignorant as we are of that of the cross stones, we have nothing like a structural erection of any sort older than the seventh century. Such numberless instances have of late years been disclosed to us of light and shadow, in the history of nations, now in gloom—now rolling forward on the summit of the wave of semi-civilization—now sunk in the trough of the sea of barbarism,—that there seems nothing very preposterous in the presumption that Scotland may, in the earliest ages, have been obedient to the common law, however deficient we may be as yet of direct proof that she was so. As it is obvious that all we have hitherto had written on this subject is the fruit of ill-considered conjecture, we shall look with deep interest to the fruits of the exertions of the Spalding Club to furnish us with complete sets of the Sculptured stones, with the view of carrying out a recommendation of Pennant, of suffering them to speak for themselves, in place of every man furnishing them with a voice to speak according to his fancies, and, above all things, endeavouring to rescue such as remain from that fate which has overtaken so many of them already.

Each side of the coffin of the St Andrews' sculpture seems to have consisted of three pieces; the end pieces are decorated with that curious kind of ornament characteristic of all the stones,—serpents, lizards, and the like, interlaced amongst each other, holding a conspicuous place amongst them. The panel which constitutes the middle portion is covered with high and rich reliefs. At one end is represented a man in rich flowing garments, with a full-bottomed wig; he has a fine sword-belt, with a sword depending in a highly-ornamented sheath. He is tearing open the jaws of a lion; the character of the animal is clearly brought out by his short snout, his mane, and the tuft at the end of his tail. The wig, the belt, and the sword-sheath, closely resemble those of the figures on the Assyrian marbles. Farther on is a dog-like quadruped with wings, pouncing on a deer, and then a huntsman with his spear in his right hand, and a small ornamented shield in his left; three greyhounds, and what seems like a wolf or jackal, with a couple of deer, are before him. In the corner above these are some other dogs and deer, with bad representations of two monkeys. On the upper and middle portion of the stone is a man on horseback; he is richly attired, wears a full-bottomed wig, and his sword-sheath seen from under his mantle is richly and elaborately sculptured; on his left wrist he holds a hawk; a lion in this case, represented with considerable fidelity and spirit, has sprung on the neck of his horse, the attack being much more coolly received than such things are in modern times.

It has been shown that these wonderful relics must have been inhumed early in the twelfth century. This date may at all events be assumed as established;

and at what period of our history, back at all events to the Roman invasion, were the arts in such a condition in Scotland as to bring such things as these into existence at all? And if we are not to look within this vast dark space for sculptures of such artistical merit from native chisels, or for any Oriental sculptures at all, we must fall back on the recesses of an unknown antiquity, and a condition of things of which the first rude traces are only now beginning to be examined. Dr Buist concluded by laying before the meeting a silver coin of a King Arsaces, who reigned in Parthia about the commencement of our era. The head was covered with a rich curled wig, exactly like those on the Assyrian sculptures and the St Andrews sarcophagus. He also laid before them a gold coin of Augustus, and two coins of Claudius Cæsar, found, in 1849, near Quilon.

NOTE.—The following is a list of the writers on Scythian or Druidical Antiquities, and on Roman Coins found in India, taken from Dr Buist's Index :—  
 Scythian Remains of Crisa (Captain Kittoe). Corbin's India Review, 1839.  
 On the Neilgherries (Captain Cotgrave). Madras Literary Transactions, 1847 (Dr Smids). Bombay Asiatic Transactions, 1849–1852. In the Deccan (Captain Taylor). *Ibidem*. Amongst the Cassia Hills (Yule). Transactions of the Bengal Asiatic Society, 1844. In various parts of the Carnatic (Rev. William Taylor). Madras Literary Transactions, 1847. Druidical Connection with India (Captain Cunningham, 1853).

Roman Coins found in India, near Coombatore (Madras Literary Transactions, 1844); near Quilon (Bengal Asiatic Transactions, 1849); at Allahabad and Enellore (Paper in Collection of Bengal Asiatic Transactions, 1832, Dr Bird); Prinsep's Catalogue of (Bombay Asiatic Transactions, 1842).