

#### IV.

#### DESCRIPTION OF A CAIRN IN THE ISLAND OF BUTE. BY JOHN MACKINLAY, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

This cairn, called "Cairn-baan,"—*i.e.* the White Cairn—is situated in the east end of the south wood of Lenihuline—the Field of Hollies—in the north end of Bute. It consists of a mound of stones 200 feet in length, lying east and west, and from 15 to 24 feet in breadth. Near its east end there is a transverse piece, like the transom of a cross, 47 feet in length. When the wood was enclosed, many years ago, the por-

tion of the stem of the cross (about 25 feet in length) above the transom, which projected beyond the line of fence of the wood, was removed, and its materials were used in the construction of the fence; but the form and extent of the part removed was (and I believe still is) perfectly distinct, its outline being defined by a line of small debris. At the west end of the stem of the cross there is a cell, 4 feet 6 inches long by 2 feet 3 inches wide, and 3 feet deep, the top, sides, and ends of which are formed of flags of schistus. The country people believed that there was a series of such cells all along the body of the cross; and in order to ascertain this point, I took a labourer with me in summer 1833, and opened up the top of the mound all along, at short intervals, and found that the whole of the mound was composed of shapeless lumps of wacken, schistus, and quartz, about the size of a man's head, and apparently brought from the channel of the burn, at the bottom of the bank on which it is placed; and I could find no trace of any cells, or any flags capable of making them, except one or two near the intersection of the cross, where it is said that a cell or cells were found at the time the east end was removed.

It may be inferred, from its being made in the form of a cross, that it was constructed after the introduction of Christianity, as a penance for some grievous offence; and that the cell at the west end, which the top flag only partially covered, leaving an opening wide enough to let a man creep in, was a place of penance, into which the offender might crouch while reciting his penitential prayers. At least this cairn does not seem capable of being used for any other purpose.

The popular belief above alluded to seems to have arisen from cairns, somewhat similar in general appearance, in the opposite parish of Kilfinan, in Argyleshire—in the original statistical account of which parish, by the Rev. Mr M'Farlane, the cairns are thus described:—"Borra, or Borradh, is also a pile of stones, but differs from a cairn in many respects—viz., in external figure, being always oblong—in internal construction—and in its size and design. There are vestiges of two of them in this parish, which, although they are mostly now dilapidated for building of houses and walls, yet so much remain of each as to show distinctly what they once were. The one of them, which is the largest, is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile north from the parish church, a little above the great line of road, on

the top of an eminence near a moss. This immense pile of stones was, till last summer [1794], near forty yards long, of considerable breadth, and of amazing depth. At the bottom, from the one end to the other, there were a number of small apartments or cells, end to end, each made up of five or seven large flags. Each cell was 6 feet long, 4 broad; and such of them as remained to be seen in our time, about 5 feet high. One large flag made up each side; and another, which was generally of a curved figure to throw off the water, answered it for a roof. The end sometimes was made up of two, and an open between them wide enough for a man to squeeze himself through. Sometimes there was only one flag in the end, and only half as high as the side flags, so that the entry was over it; and in these there were only five flags. They were generally built on an eminence, where the fall of the water was from thence on either side; and when that was not the case, the cells were at some distance from the bottom of the pile or Borradh. The cells were not always in a straight line from end to end, but they were always so regular as that the same communication pervaded the whole." (*Statistical Account*, vol. xiv., p. 257.) The other Borradh is stated to be about three miles south from the church, and is described to have been much smaller in dimensions, and in a more dilapidated condition, although in other respects the same. Some fanciful and improbable uses were assigned to them, which are unnecessary to be here repeated. They were probably keeping-places for grain, &c.; and although of an oblong form, do not appear to have been in the form of a cross, like Cairn-baan.

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MONDAY, 10th January 1859.

Professor J. Y. SIMPSON, V. P., in the Chair.

His Grace the DUKE OF HAMILTON AND BRANDON, being a Peer of the Realm, was, in accordance with the Laws of the Society, admitted a Fellow without the usual ballot.

The following gentlemen were balloted for, and elected Fellows of the Society :—

Lieut.-Col. JAMES A. ROBERTSON.  
WILLIAM DRUMMOND, Esq., Rockdale Lodge, Stirling.  
JOSEPH NOEL PATON, Esq., R.S.A.

At the same time,

Dr J. M. LAPPENBERG, of Hamburg, and  
G. R. KLEMMING, Esq., of the Royal Library of Stockholm,  
were elected Corresponding Members.

The donations included the following :—

Four circular Discs, each about 3 inches in diameter, of very thin gold plate, almost like gold leaf, with various concentric and radiating markings, stamped, indented, or punched on them in relief; and a collection of Amber Beads of various shapes, found in a cist, in a Barrow, at Huntiscarth, Orkney. (See the accompanying careful drawing, Plate XXII., which shows their character better than any description; and Communication, p. 194). By JAMES FARRER, Esq., F.S.A. Scot. These gold discs somewhat resemble those figured by T. Crofton Croker, Esq., in vol. iii. of the "Collectanea Antiqua," and published separately "On the Discoveries of Gold Ornaments found in Ireland:" London, 1854. Those figured by Mr Croker display apparently a large cross, which fills up the centre of the field. In the gold plates now described and figured, there is no marking that could be supposed to represent any emblem of this kind.

Portions of Human Crania and other bones, found in cists at Lundin Mill, near Largo, Fifeshire. By Mrs DUNDAS DURHAM of Largo. Additional stone cists have been discovered since last meeting, in working the quarry near Lundin Mill. These generally are formed of rude sandstone slabs, and measure some 6 feet 5 inches in length by 1 foot 3 inches in breadth inside. The cists are more or less filled with sand. The quarry is situated on the edge of the sandy links which border the seashore, just above high-water mark.

Tabular View of the Genealogies of the Families of Hay, in Scotland, from 1170 to 1840. By DAVID LAING, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

The Origin and Meaning of the early Interlaced Ornamentation found

on the Sculptured Stones of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man (pp. 24), 8vo, Manchester, 1858. By GILBERT J. FRENCH, Esq. of Bolton, the Author.

A Penni Worth of Witte, Florice and Blancheffour, and other Pieces of Ancient English Poetry, selected from the Auchinleck Manuscript. (Edited by David Laing.) 4to, Edinburgh, 1857. Also,

Memoirs of the Insurrection in Scotland in 1715, by John, Master of Sinclair. From the original Manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Rosslyn, with Notes by Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (Edited by James Mac-knight and David Laing). 4to, Edinburgh, 1858. By the EDITORS, in name of the COUNCIL OF THE ABBOTSFORD CLUB.

The following communications were read:—