

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND.

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SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION, 1857-1858.  
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ANNIVERSARY MEETING, 30th November 1857.

COSMO INNES, Esq., P.C.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Office-Bearers of the Society for the ensuing year were elected as follows:—

Patron.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

President.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF BREADALBANE, K.T.

Vice-Presidents.

The Honourable LORD MURRAY.

COSMO INNES, Esq.

The Honourable LORD NEAVES.

Councillors.

ROBERT CHAMBERS, Esq.

JOSEPH ROBERTSON, Esq.

Rev. W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF

JAMES T. GIBSON CRAIG, Esq.
 FRANCIS ABBOTT, Esq.
 THOMAS THOMSON, Esq.
 ARCHIBALD T. BOYLE, Esq.
 JOHN MACKINLAY, Esq.
 THOMAS STEVENSON, Esq.

Secretaries.

JOHN STUART, Esq.
 JOHN ALEXANDER SMITH, M.D.
 DAVID LAING, Esq.,
 JOHN M. MITCHELL, Esq., } *for Foreign Correspondence.*

Treasurer.

THOMAS B. JOHNSTON, Esq.

Curators of Museum.

ROBERT FRAZER, Esq.,
 BARRON GRAHAME, Esq.

Librarian.

ALEXANDER CHRISTIE, Esq.

Assistant-Librarian.

MR WILLIAM T. M'CULLOCH.

Auditors.

JAMES DRUMMOND, Esq.
 W. B. JOHNSTONE, Esq.

For the purpose of filling up two vacancies in the stated number of Honorary Members of the Society, upon the recommendation of the Council,

The Rev. WILLIAM REEVES, D.D., Ballymena, and
 A. HENRY RHIND, younger of Sibster, Esq., Wick,

were unanimously elected.

On proceeding to a ballot,

W. E. EVANS, Esq., Rector of the Grammar-School, Aberdeen,

was elected a Fellow, and

W. R. WILDE, Esq., Secretary of Foreign Correspondence to the Royal
Irish Academy, Dublin, and

EUGENE CURRY, Esq., M.R.I.A., Dublin,

as Corresponding Members of the Society.

The Donations to the Museum and Library, received during the summer recess, were exhibited.

COSMO INNES, Esq., V.P., delivered the following

OPENING ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,—On this, St Andrew's day, it is a customary and commendable practice to commence the business of the season by a review of the state and prospects of the Society, and of that department of historical study which we cultivate. I find we are now 77 years old; for the Society was instituted in 1780, though it did not obtain its charter till 1783. The cause of the delay was curious. It arose from the opposition of two bodies whom we should not now willingly think hostile—the University of Edinburgh, and the Faculty of Advocates. They did us the honour to be jealous of our preparations for study, and especially of our projected Museum, which might, it was thought, divert an old MS. or coin from the Library, or some attractive specimen of natural history (for our original institution included natural history) from the Museum which the University was then projecting for itself. But in spite of the avowed jealousy of these powerful rivals, the Society of Antiquaries obtained their charter (dated 29th March 1783), by virtue of which we have the honour to call Her Majesty and her successors our Patrons. The Society was very vigorous in its first years. The lists of the early members are preserved by Mr Smellie in his History of the Society. In 1784 there were 33 office-bearers, 92 ordinary members, 62 honorary, 124 corresponding, 17 artists associated, including a fair

sprinkling of nobility, and names desirable for influence and ornament. These lists comprehend a share of that intelligence and brilliant talent which then distinguished Edinburgh; while the lists of corresponding and honorary members are filled with the names of the best antiquaries of Rome, and of men who, like Horace Walpole, Daines Barrington, Richard Gough, and Bishop Percy, while zealous antiquaries, threw the charm of their own genius over the study which they loved so well. One of the early schemes of our Society—proposed originally by Lord Hailes, who may be counted the originator and first director of accurate historical inquiry among us—was a collection of the chartularies of our bishoprics and monasteries, which he offered himself to superintend. Though long overlooked, that great object was brought forward in more favourable circumstances by Scott and Mr Thomas Thomson, and has been prosecuted almost to a conclusion in our own time. But the great project of the original members and the early meetings was to obtain an account of every parish in Scotland, its natural history, antiquities, and statistics. I need not tell you how, a few years later, that scheme was taken up by Sir John Sinclair, and brought to a successful termination by the clergy of the National Church, whose labours afford us a mass of topography which, imperfect as it is, cannot be paralleled in any other country. Many circumstances, however, combined to thwart the study of antiquities at that time, and to diminish the estimation and usefulness of our Society. In one respect only did it thrive and advance from its commencement, and through those years of surrounding torpor. The MUSEUM gradually rose into importance; and by the liberality and patriotism of Scotsmen everywhere, it has kept its place among the collections for illustrating ancient national manners and customs. I must remind you, however, that until lately our fine Museum was but a rude and undigested heap of matter, where the skilled antiquary indeed might find his object of search, but only confounding and misleading the younger student. But we have fallen upon better times as regards the study of our national antiquities. The student has no longer to grope for his historical facts through rooms full of unarranged and MS. record. The Record Commission, however vilified in England, cleansed the Augean stable of Scottish records; and by its labours—directed by one master-mind—and by the ancillary labours of the Bannatyne, Maitland, and Spalding Clubs,

we have on the shelves of our better libraries a long series of national and local records—a body of chronicles—a vast mass of early documents illustrating life and manners—which were known only by name to our predecessors. These give accuracy of fact and date. No looseness of statement will be tolerated within the range of these authorities. But, more, the treasury of our national records itself is now open to the student, not only free of expense, but with a guide worthy of his place to assist and encourage his researches. It is not now necessary to remind any one that that repository does not contain only title-deeds and irksome multitudes of legal documents. It is full of the genuine materials of history, as one of our most valued members can testify; for it is from his unwearied study of a single branch of these records that we are to expect ere long “The Domestic Annals of Scotland.” I need not tell you that there are many rich collections of antiquities, public and private, in England, always open to the intelligent student. Dublin has a Museum rich in antiquities that march side by side with ours, giving and receiving illustration at every step, while it dazzles you with its armlets and girdles of massy gold. Copenhagen, I believe, has a still finer Museum of antiquities, for there the King is a zealous antiquary; and besides the chief director, Councillor C. J. Thomsen (to whose indefatigable exertions the formation of the Museum itself is in a great measure owing), it has had the good fortune to secure the services of a very accomplished Curator—one who has lived amongst us, and in whom every Scottish antiquary will find a friend. It is in fact to the modern antiquaries of Denmark and the North that we owe our present systematic arrangement of antiquities, which you know as applied to our own country in Dr Daniel Wilson’s “Pre-historic Annals.” I need not stop to point out the numerous exceptions with which that system must be received, and need hardly warn you against pushing any such system to a rigorous degree of precision. The classification, such as it is, has done much to bring order and light out of confusion and chaos. It is not only in museums and libraries, in printed records, and accessible record-offices, that this age is more propitious to the study of antiquities. There is a feeling in society and through the world in our favour. You no longer hear antiquaries sneered at as laborious triflers. Any one who witnessed the admiration and intelligent interest shown by the strangers who visited

the fine exhibition of the Archæological Institute here last year—any one who has watched the crowds at Manchester gathering round the tables covered with well-arranged antiquities—must admit that the public are not dead to the feeling of the antiquary, especially where, by skilful arrangement, the history of art is illustrated along with the history of man's progress. I am satisfied that the fault is rather in ourselves. I am not here to dissuade from high-sustained study and scholarly labour. Research and comparison of antiquities are our proper functions as antiquaries. But it is not impossible—it is worth the labour, and, believe me, it is not unworthy of you—to make our studies popular, to carry the intelligent public along with us in our researches, our comparisons, even in those discussions which form the business of our ordinary meetings. Almost our foremost duty is, as the custodiers of this fine Museum, now national property, to fill up its chief blanks, and secure additional objects of interest; to improve its classification, as illustrating the progress of the people and the country from the earliest times; to leave absolutely no object unlabelled; to distribute the collection so as to show the progress from the rudest period to the most advanced of mediæval art—of that rich period which excites the admiration and sometimes the despair of modern imitators; to make the collection easy of access to every student. To realise even a small part of these objects, we must have more space, more light, more attendance for visitors and students. It is a great pleasure to think that these objects are now within definite reach. Fitting apartments are now allotted to us. The Treasury, the Board of Works, are all willing we should have possession. The Board of Manufactures are not unwilling. We find no opposition anywhere; only the thing does not move on. The pictures belonging to the Board still cover what may be our walls; and, though all the machinery is right here, it will require a little energy and activity of our friends to launch the "Leviathan." If we wanted any additional motive for desiring to get into our new and more spacious apartments, we have it in two valuable collections which wait for that event to be made available. Mr Rhind, to whose zealous and influential good offices the final arrangement of our new apartments is in no small degree owing, has presented to the Museum some large cases of Egyptian antiquities, the results of several years' exploration in the tombs beside the Nile, which cannot

even be opened till we have room and light for their arrangement. Secondly, Sir George Clerk of Penicuik has intimated his intention of presenting that important collection of Roman altars, and other vestiges of Roman occupation of Scotland, now at Penicuik; but this gift, like the former, depends upon our having a fitting place of custody and exhibition. These examples will not be thrown away; and already other collections are preparing, which will fill up some of the largest blanks of our Museum. These are steps of progress—a progress that marks the present estimation in which the Society stands with the country, and which will lead more than anything to our extended influence and usefulness. A few figures may help to show the present state and prospects of our Society. The *Fellows*, in March 1846 (11 years ago), amounted to 146; in November 1857, to 249. Since 1845 the funds of the Society have in like manner recovered from a state which involved the very existence of the Society:—Therefore I am bound to say the Society is making progress in every way. But I think it is capable of becoming greatly more influential. Our new Museum will do much to rouse public attention. Again, the wide field which we occupy might be advantageously subdivided, were the members, as has sometimes here been suggested, to devote themselves in sections to special objects, thus throwing upon the labourers more of the interest and the responsibility of individual cultivation. We must therefore call upon members to make some exertion in our behalf. Many of our Fellows could give us papers that would create great interest in our proceedings. Many have opportunities to procure objects for the Museum. All can make more widely known the great objects of our Society, and so secure sympathy and support.

My last duty, as Chairman, is to announce the names of Fellows and Members whom we have lost since last Anniversary Meeting. There are five Fellows—

	Elected.
WALTER ADAM, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.,	1844
Right Hon. JAMES EARL OF FIFE, K. T.,	1820
GEORGE FORBES, Esq., F.R.S.E.,	1819
REV. JAMES MATHER,	1849
WILLIAM HENRY PLAYFAIR, Esq., Architect,	1823

To this number is to be added one Honorary Member—

FRANCIS, EARL of ELLESMERE, K.G., elected in 1849,

a person so accomplished, that his zeal for our special study can hardly form part of his character. However amiable and regretted some of these are, they were all better known in other relations than as Fellows and Members of our Society, and it would be out of place to attempt their eulogy here. During the same period the Society has received an addition of nineteen Fellows.

On the motion of RICHARD HUIE, M.D., seconded by the Rev. W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D., the thanks of the Meeting were tendered to Mr INNES for his address.

The ordinary business of the Meeting being closed, the following Communication was read:—