

V.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES OF YETTS, OR GRATED IRON DOORS, OF SCOTTISH CASTLES AND TOWERS. BY DAVID CHRISTISON, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

In a paper published in the *Proceedings* of the Society for 1883, I described, perhaps too minutely, twenty-four iron-grated doors or "yetts" peculiar to ancient Scottish castles, and I should not have reverted to the subject, were it not that twenty-two additional examples have since become known to me, some of them differing considerably from those previously described. The number of known yetts, therefore, is now raised to forty-six, without reckoning three iron gates of exceptional construction; and although it is quite possible that others may still remain in obscurity, the time seems appropriate enough for summing up our whole knowledge on the subject.

In the present paper I shall give, first, a general description of the yetts; secondly, an alphabetical list of them, with dimensions and certain other details; thirdly, brief notices of such as either have not been already described or require additional remarks; and fourthly, general observations on their history and distribution.

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Construction.—It is a remarkable fact that, with very few exceptions, the surviving defensive iron doors of Scotland are constructed on the same principle, consisting essentially in an alternate interpenetration of the bars, in such a manner that the perpendiculars pierce dilated "eyes" in the horizontals in two diagonally opposite quarters, while it is the reverse in the two other quarters. The result is a firmly compacted gate, from which no bar can be withdrawn singly. At first sight the mode in which such a gate is put together seems somewhat puzzling; but when the bars with their eyes have been forged, it is merely requisite (see diagram, *Proceedings*, 1883, p. 119) to run the lower horizontals through the eyes of the perpendiculars of one side, and the upper horizontals through the eyes of the perpendiculars of the other

side, thus forming as it were two half gates, which are then easily run into each other.

The designs are worked out with no attention to regularity, and apparently very much by rule of thumb. The bars are rarely equidistant; in some cases they run across somewhat obliquely, in others they are themselves not straight. The most remarkable instance of the first irregularity is in the yett at Castle Menzies, where the distances between the bars, as furnished to me by Sir Robert Menzies, are—along the top $4\frac{1}{2}$, $8\frac{1}{2}$, $8\frac{3}{4}$, 7, 8, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches; and down the side, $4\frac{1}{2}$, 9, 9, $8\frac{3}{4}$, 9, $9\frac{1}{4}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Of the second and third irregularities, examples will be found in the drawing of Drumlanrig yett (*Proceedings*, 1883, p. 112).

Form and Dimensions.—The majority are rectangular; a considerable number, however, are round-headed. Only two are double-leaved, both round-headed. Only three have or have had wickets. The dimensions of the smallest yett (Dingwall) are 4 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 3 feet 4 inches; of the largest single-leaved one (Drumlanrig), 9 feet 1 inch by 6 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch; of the largest double-leaved one (Doune), about 10 feet by 8 feet. The number of the bars is not always in proportion to the size of the yetts. Thus the Dunrobin yett measures 87 by 53 inches, and the Dunbeath one 66 by 43 inches, yet they have the same number of horizontal bars, and the smaller yett has one more perpendicular bar than the larger one. Hence it follows that the spaces between the bars vary considerably in different yetts. At Dunbeath they are only 5 inches square, at Comlongan about 8 inches square.

The thickness of the bars has suffered much reduction from the rust of centuries in most, if not in all, cases. The most massive bars, measured by me, are in the probably very old yett at Comlongan. Some of them are $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch square, expanding to $2\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{3}{4}$ at the eyes. The thinnest are perhaps at Closeburn, $1\frac{1}{8}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$. The frame bars are generally somewhat thicker than the contained bars.

Hinges.—Ordinarily there are two hinges. About a third of the yetts, however, have three; some of the heaviest yetts having only two, while some of the lightest have three. The hinge-knuckle is either a complete circle or the greater part of one, and revolves on a cylindrical crook,

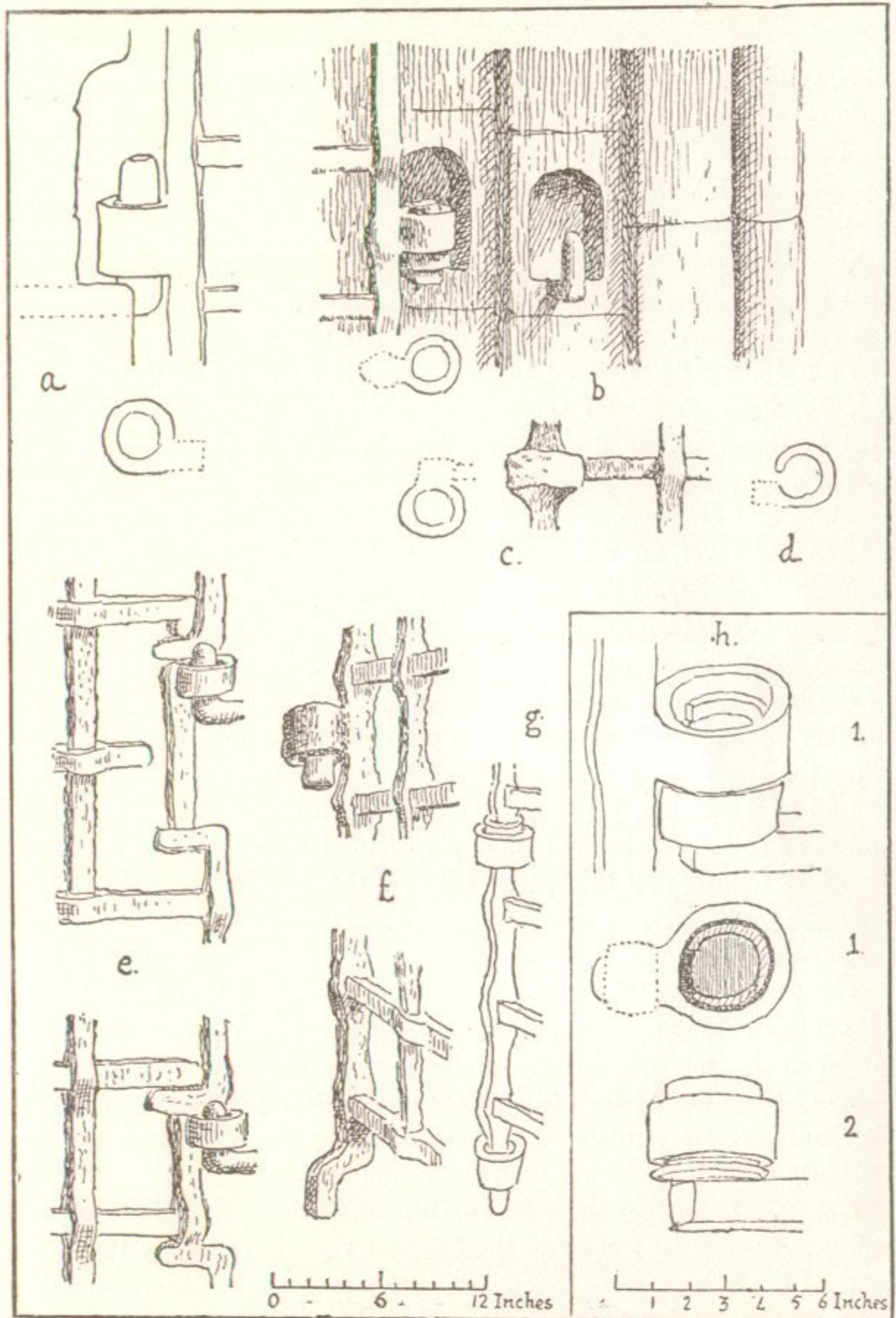


Fig. 1. Hinges.

deeply sunk in the wall. In fig. 1 I have represented several varieties of hinges, drawn roughly to scale; (*a*) is a side view and section of an ordinary hinge, partly recessed in the wall, at Fyvie Castle; (*b*) a side view of the doorway at Braikie, showing successively from the right, the exterior moulding, the rebate and recessed hinge for the wooden door, and the rebate and recessed hinge for the iron yett; (*c*) a front view and section of the hinge-knuckle of Dumbarton yett, exceptionally set at right angles to the face; (*d*) the incomplete circular knuckle at Pitreavie; (*e*) the unique hinges at Barns Tower, recessed in the iron-work of the yett itself; (*f*) the peculiar bent end of the upright frame bar in the massive yett at Dundas, so fashioned as to pivot on the floor, directly under the single hinge near the top; (*g*) a straight floor-pivot at Drum, formed by a prolongation of the frame bar, which higher up is itself encircled by two hinges, but this is a modern arrangement. At Smailholm (fig. 11) there is also a floor-pivot; and both there and in an iron-lathed door at Dunbeath (fig. 13), hinges of altogether exceptional form occur. Returning to fig. 1, the peculiar hinges (1) of the iron yett, and of the wooden door (2) at Kinnaird, are shown on an enlarged scale at (*h*): In the former the horizontal limb of the crook is squared, and is protected from friction by a thick collar; the upright limb is shorter than the knuckle, and has a flange round the greater part of the top. The hinge of the wooden door has the horizontal limb of the crook squared, and is furnished with a thin collar.

Bolts and Fastenings.—The great majority of yetts are fastened by bolts on a principle commonly used now for field gates. The bolt slides through a couple of rings on the bars into a hole in the wall, and is fixed by a hasp closing over a staple, placed usually on one of the perpendicular bars. A variety of these bolts, drawn to the same scale, are shown in fig. 2. At Crathes (*b*) and Dundas (*d*) are simple forms, in which the bolt is cylindrical throughout. In (*e*) (Dingwall) the bolt is thickened roughly in the middle. In (*a*) and (*c*) (Fyvie and Edinburgh Castle) the middle portion is thickened and squared. This enlargement checks the bolt from moving too far, a purpose which is effected otherwise in some cylindrical bolts, as at Crathes (*b*), by a projecting pin on one side, at Dingwall (*e*) by a pin on one side and collar on the other, and at

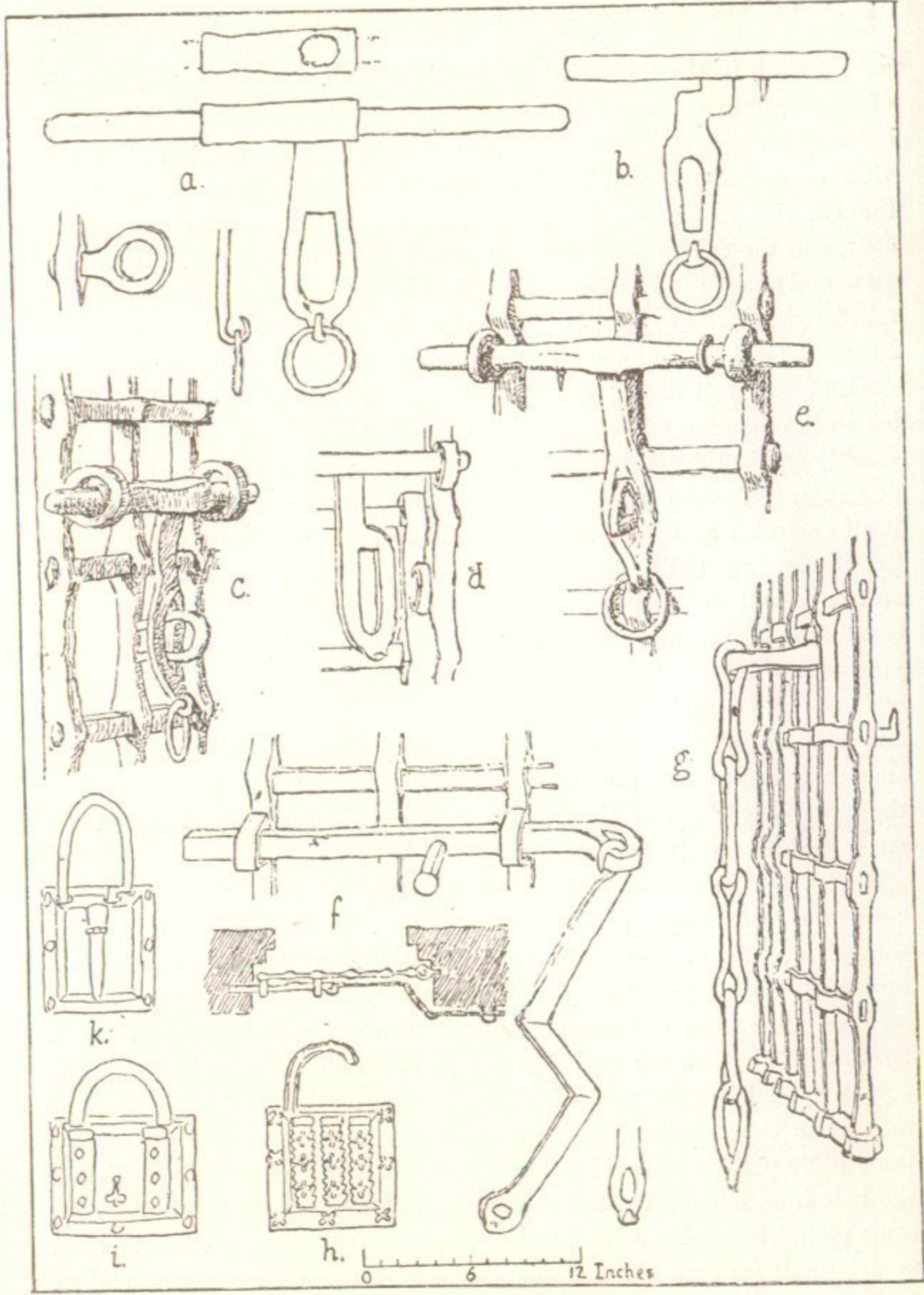


Fig. 2. Bolts and Padlocks.

Fordell by a collar on each side. The hasps are usually simple and straight, as at Fyvie (*a*) and Dingwall (*e*); or more elegantly formed with a curve, as at Edinburgh Castle (*c*). Some are provided with a lifting ring (*a*, *b*, *c*, *e*). Exceptional forms of hasps occur at Inverquharity, Craig (figs. 6, 7), and Crathes (fig. 2, *b*), where they are zigzag, and Dundas (*d*), where they are shaped like the letter *b*. In this drawing the much-worn hasp has been restored to something like its original form. The bolts at Fyvie are remarkably massive, two being 29 and the third 25 inches long. Each of them has a different maker's mark. The form and superior size of one of the largest are shown at (*a*), from drawings furnished by the Rev. Mr Milne.

An exceptional bolt occurs at Fingask (fig. 2, *f*). It is massive and rectangular, 25 inches long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in cross section, and to the end of it is hooked a flat iron bar 41 inches long, with a double bend. The original doorway is destroyed, but the bolt was probably fixed in some such way as shown in the reduced plan at *f*, the bends in the bar being for the purpose of enabling it to be fastened to a staple behind the wall, the whole arrangement thus forming a rigid bar and bolt in one. Remaining rings show that this yett had also two ordinary bolts, now lost. Whether the square bolt was contemporary with these, or succeeded them, cannot now be ascertained.

Of forty yetts, which either retain bolts of the ordinary type, or show, by the presence of rings, that they once had them, eleven had one, twenty-eight had two, and Fyvie alone had three.

In three yetts there is no trace of bolts having been used. At Barns (*g*) a massive chain, closed on a staple behind the doorway, was apparently the only fastening. At Doune an iron bar, stretched behind the yett, appears to have been deemed sufficient; and at Balveny, the two-leaved yett is closed by a peculiar bifurcated iron bar, hinged on the yett itself fig. (3).

It is to be presumed that the bolts were fastened with padlocks, at least in more recent times. In connection with the Scottish iron gates, three padlocks remain. They are of iron, and are all of the same general form. At p. 116, *Proceedings*, 1883, I have given a drawing and description of the somewhat ornate padlock of the Crown Room yett, Edinburgh Castle. I reproduce it here (fig. 2, *h*) for comparison with the other

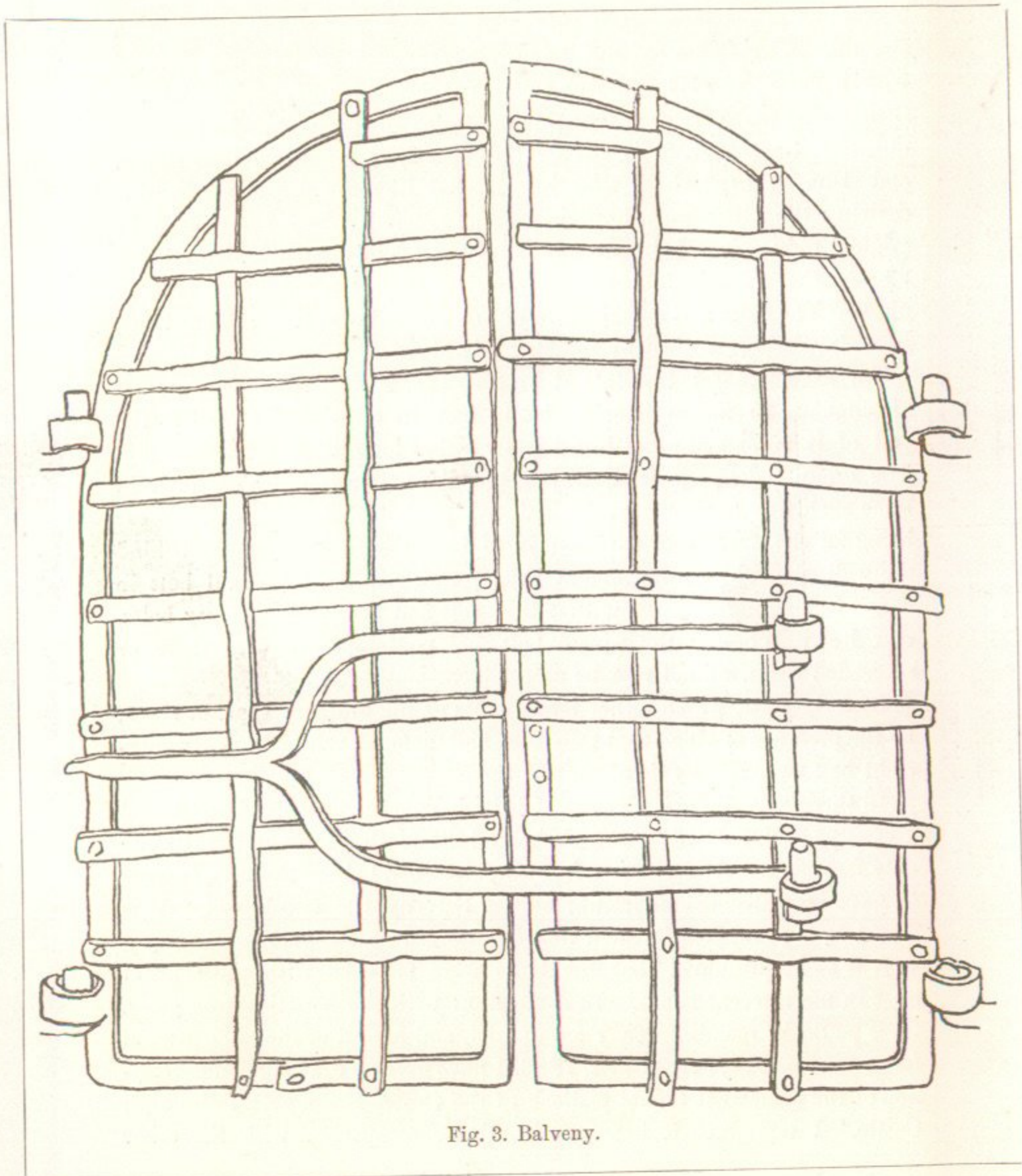


Fig. 3. Balveny.

two. One of these, at Craigievar (fig. 2, *i*, from a drawing by Captain Forbes, R.N.), differs from the Edinburgh one in having little if any ornament, and in having a sliding instead of a hinged band to cover the keyhole. The third, at Duntreath (fig. 2, *k*), is quite plain.

Position of the Yett, and Combination with other Defences.—The yett usually stands in the entrance, near the outside, but behind a wooden door, from which it is separated by a space of 2 or 3 to 6 or 7 inches, the hinges of both doors being protected by rybats, and the defence strengthened by one or more bars stretched across, usually behind the yett only; but at Fordell and Barns behind the wooden door only. In only one instance—at Isle, in Dumfriesshire—are bar-holes found behind both the wooden and iron doors (*Proceedings*, 1883, p. 107). As the defensive arrangements here are more complete than elsewhere, I have reproduced (in fig. 4, *k*) a plan and elevations, showing the bar-holes behind the wooden door, and the slots for two bars behind the yett. Besides the examples at Isle, slots in the walls for a bar occur also at Gordon (*Proceedings*, 1883, p. 114). In this instance, the bar revolved upon a pivot fixed on the centre of the yett itself. In almost all cases the bars have been too far separated from the yetts to give them direct support. Sometimes they are 6 or 7 inches behind the yett; but even in these cases, if the yett were forced, the bar would prevent the yett opening sufficiently to allow a man to pass. In exceptional instances there are no holes for bars, and in others the wooden and iron doors are several feet apart, but in both cases the doorways have probably undergone modern alterations.

The diameter of the bar-holes is usually so great as to have given rise to the general belief that the bars were of wood; but however this may be, the only existing bars—at Doune, Menzies, and Tilquhillie—are of iron, although the tunnels, into which the two former at least run, are very much wider than seems necessary. The bar at Castle Menzies is described at p. 138, *Proceedings*, 1883. Those at Doune and Tilquhillie are described in the notices of the yetts to which they belong.

At Comlongan (*Proceedings*, p. 110), and there only, a couple of iron links or bracelets hang from a horizontal bar of the yett; and as they are opposite the bar-holes, there can be no doubt the bar was passed through

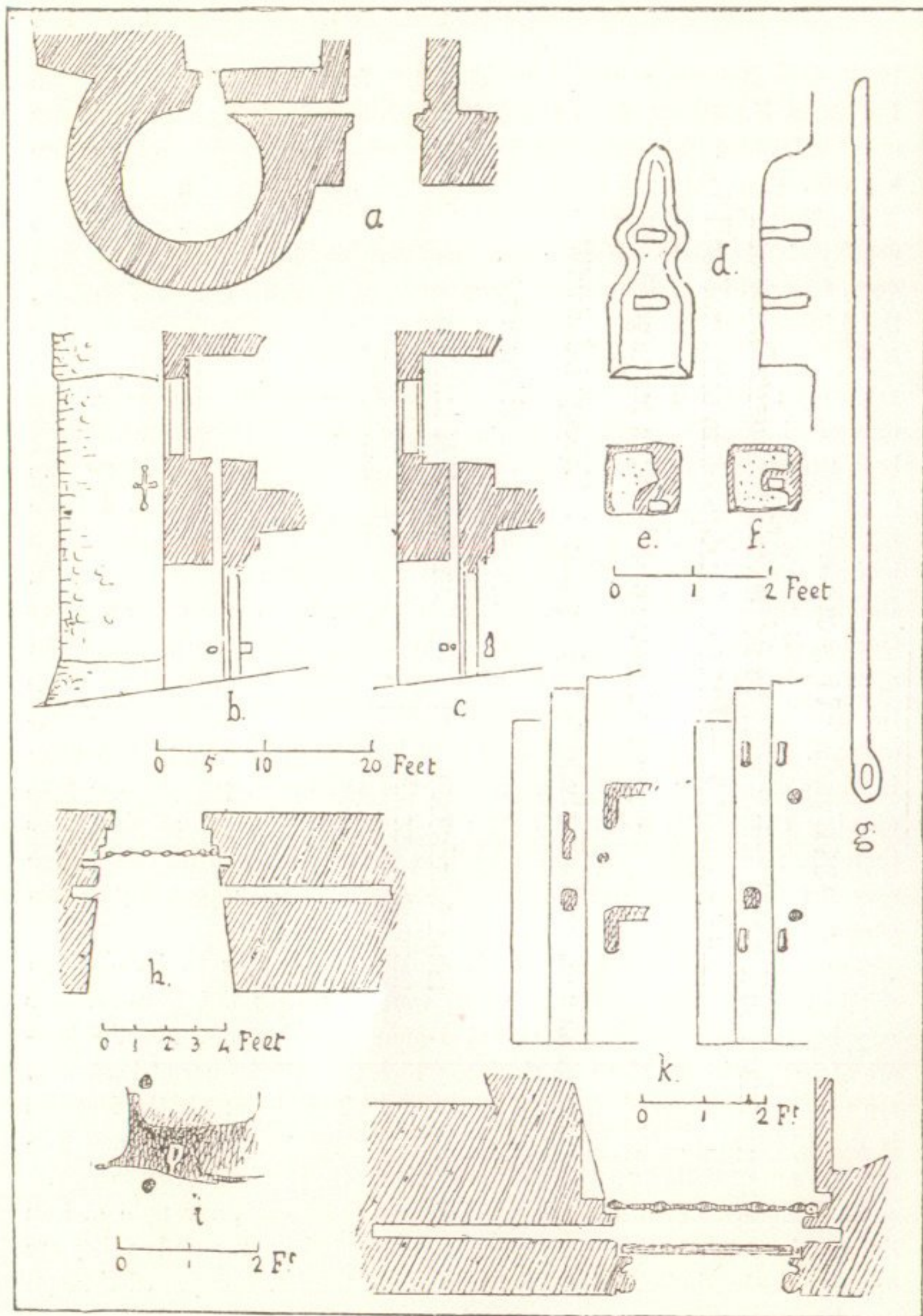


Fig. 4. Bar and Bar-Holes.

	Dimen- sions.		Number of Bars.		Number of Hinges.	Number of Bolts.	Holes for Bar behind Yett.	Authorities.
	Height.	Breadth.	Upright.	Cross.				
Dumbarton, ² . . .	87	38	4	8	2	1 ²	yett removed	{ Mr M. Young, Paisley, and Mrs Turnbull, Clune House. Rev. Dr Joass.
Dunbeath,	66	43	6	9	2	2 ³	yett removed	
Dundas,	87	55	6	10	1 ⁴	2	for one	{ John Christison, W.S., and Dr Christison.
Dunlop,	71	46	5	9	3	2 ²	yett removed	
Dunrobin,	87	53	5	9	2	2 ²	doorway altered	Rev. Dr Joass.
Duntreath,	76	54	of solid iron do.		number of hinges and bolts?		yetts removed	
Do.	68	42						{ Mr A. R. Duncan and Dr Christison.
Edinburgh (Castle),	75	40	4	8	2	1	none	
Do. (Haddo's Hole),	63	36	3	7	2	...	yett removed	Dr Christison.
Eilean Dunain, . .	71	45	5	9	2	2 ²	yett removed	{ Rev. Dr Joass and Mr R. Maclean.
Fingask,	71	39	4	8	2	3 ³	doorway altered	
Fordell,	72	50	5	9	2	1	{ behind wooden door	{ Rev. J. R. Macpherson and Dr Christison. Mr J. Turnbull, W.S., and Mr Beveridge.
Forres,	63	31	3	8	2	1	yett removed	
Fyvie,	108	65	7	12	3	3	doorway altered	Rev. Dr Milne.
Glamis,	80	56	6	9	2	2	doorway altered	
Gordon,	74	50	5	8	2	2 ³	slots for one	Rev. J. Stevenson, LL.D. John Christison, W.S.
Invermark,	72	40	4	8	2	1	for one	
Inverquharary, . .	84	52	5	9	3	2	for two	Mr G. Gordon Milne. Mr G. Gordon Milne.
Isle,	66	39	3	6	2	1	slots for two	
Kinnaird (Perthshire),	85	57	7	11	2	2 ³	none	{ Mr Gillon Fergusson and Dr Christison. Rev. J. R. Macpherson and Dr Christison.
Lennoxlove,	78	55	6	9	2	2	none	
Menzies,	74	51	5	7	2	2	for one	Mr David Jeffrey and Rev. R. Nimmo Smith.
Mingary, ²	68	40	4	7	2	0	for two	
Moy (Mull),	?	?	5	8	2	2 ³	for one	{ Sir R. Menzies, Bart. Mr J. J. Dalgleish and Mr Armstrong.
Paisley,	See	Dum bar ton.						
Pitfirrane,	77	55	5	8	2	2	yett removed	Mr Lindsay Bury.
Pitreavie,	80	50	5	9	2	1	none	
Smallholm,	68	38	3	7	1 ⁴	1		{ Rev. Dr Joass and Hon. H. J. Hep- burne Scott.
Tilquhillie,	63	43	5	8	2	1	for one	

¹ Original dimensions and number of bars estimated, one or more bars being lost.² One bolt lost.³ Two bolts lost.⁴ And a pivot on the floor.

III. NOTICES OF YETTS NOT PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED.

In the following notices the yetts are arranged in geographical order, in a general way from the south and east northwards and westwards.

Closeburn, Dumfriesshire.—I am informed by Mr Brown of Closeburn Castle, that the yett is in the old entrance to the keep, now enclosed by modern additions, but originally giving directly on the outside, at a height of 9 feet from the ground. The yett, which has lost the lower frame-bar, is placed close behind an ancient wooden door, with old iron fittings, which when shut is flush with the outside wall.

Castlecary, Stirlingshire.—In this well-preserved and still inhabited little keep the yett is placed at the entrance of a more recent addition, having the date 1679 over the door; but it is quite possible that it previously guarded the original entrance to the keep, now built up. The yett has lost its lower frame-bar and the single bolt. There is no room in the doorway, which is only about a foot thick, for the ordinary bar-holes. A modern wooden door, fitted with the ancient hinges and a fine old knocker of iron, is placed as close in front of the yett as the hinges will allow.

Lennoxlove, East Lothian.—In my former paper this yett was merely mentioned. I have now to add, on the authority of the Rev. Mr Nimmo Smith of Haddington, and Mr Jeffrey, the present occupant of the castle, that the yett is in the old entrance, behind the outer of two rybats, and had therefore apparently been *in front* of the wooden door (which no longer exists)—a very unusual arrangement, if indeed it ever was an original one.

Dumbarton, Dumbartonshire.—The Paisley Museum contains a yett, of which the following history has been furnished partly by the keeper, Mr Morris Young, and partly by Mrs Turnbull, Clune House, Port-Glasgow. The yett was bought, about 1870, from "Johnnie a' things" of Dumbarton, by Mr Lang of Port-Glasgow, from whom it passed to the late Mr John M'Murtrie of the same place, uncle of Mrs Turnbull. The Port-Glasgow band, when it was known that it was being brought to the town, turned out and played marching before it. Finally, it was presented to the Paisley Museum by Mr M'Murtrie. The postern where it

stood is still pointed out to visitors at the castle. While regretting that the interesting relic should have been removed from its natural site, we must feel some gratification that in these utilitarian times it was received with so much honour in Port-Glasgow, and that it has probably found a more secure resting-place in a public museum than it was allowed in its original home, albeit one of Her Majesty's castles. A photograph, kindly sent by Mr Young, shows that the yett is much corroded, having lost the lower frame-bar, the bolts, and a hinge. The remaining hinge (fig. 1, *c*) is quite exceptionally set at right angles to the face of the yett.

Pitreavie, Fifeshire.—A good drawing and description of this yett will be found in vol. ii. p. 539, of Messrs MacGibbon and Ross's work on Scottish Castles. The proprietor, Mr Beveridge, F.S.A. Scot., informs me, in addition, that the hinges are recessed about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the wall; that the hinge crooks are 3 inches in diameter; and that the yett is set behind a modern wooden door, which he believes replaced an ancient studded one of oak.

Downe, Perthshire.—The arrangements for the defence of the entrance to this important castle are so well preserved that I shall describe them in some detail by help of the plans on fig. 4, founded partly on those in Messrs MacGibbon and Ross's work. The entrance to the castle is by an arched passage or "pend," about 50 feet long, 8 feet wide, and 12 feet high, passing under the hall, and opening on the courtyard. The passage slopes inwards and upwards at a rise of 1 foot in 8, and is unpaved. The entrance to this pend is shown in plan and section (fig. 4, *a, b, c*). For the first 4 feet on entering, there are no signs of defences or obstacles on the side-walls, and an enemy standing in the archway would be quite sheltered from missiles from the top of the wall and flanking tower. At 4 feet from the entrance on the right side (fig. 4, *c*) is a rectangular opening 7 inches by 5, now built up, the use of which is doubtful; close behind it is a smaller round hole opposite to an oval opening, now built up, in the left-hand wall (*b*). Probably a chain was stretched across here. A few inches back, the portcullis—which no longer exists—stood, when lowered from the slit in the window-sill of the hall. This slit is 8 inches wide and 6 feet across; and as the entrance is 2

feet wider, the portcullis when lowered must have left an open space of a foot on each side, which seems remarkable, particularly as the rybat in rear, which projects 6 inches, is rendered less effective in barring the entrance by being bevelled outwards.

Three inches behind the rybat hangs the double-leaved iron yett,¹ of which I give a sketch (fig. 5), showing also the architecture of this part of the pend. The lower bar of one leaf is entirely gone, as is a wicket which partially filled a vacant space, 4 feet 6 inches by 3 feet, in the other. A large hole in the horizontal bar above shows where the wicket turned on a prolongation of its own side-bar, and three small holes in the yett-side-bar below indicate the position of a hinge for the wicket. There is no trace of a bolt or fastening on either leaf. Close behind the rybat on the left side is the square mouth, 12 by 10 inches (fig. 4, *b*), of a tunnel 11 feet long, shown in plan (*a*), opening at the other end into the doorway of the round tower. From end to end of this tunnel, and occupying the greater part of its width, lies an oaken beam, the end of which and of the iron bar at the mouth of the tunnel, are shown at (*e*). But the beam is here much worn, and Mr Dunbar, the warder, has ascertained from inspection of the deeper parts that the iron bar worked in a lateral groove, as shown in section (*f*). As the length of the beam is 11 feet and that of the iron bar 10 feet 2 inches, besides a part broken off, while the width of the entrance is only 8 feet, it follows that the beam and bar must have been built in at the original construction of the castle, which gives them the respectable age of 460 years. The iron bar (*g*) is rectangular, and upwards of 2 inches square, ending with an expansion containing an eye 5 by 2 inches, which fits over the lower of two staples in a hole of ornamental form on the opposite wall (front view and section, *d*). The two staples are 9 inches apart, and the object of the upper one is not apparent. There is no pin or other fastening now remaining.

The access to the first floor of the castle is by an outside stair, at the

¹ In my former paper I mentioned that, from a drawing in Billing's *Baronial Antiquities*, I believed this yett to be of comparatively modern design, but a personal inspection proves it to be constructed on the same principle as the other Scottish yetts.

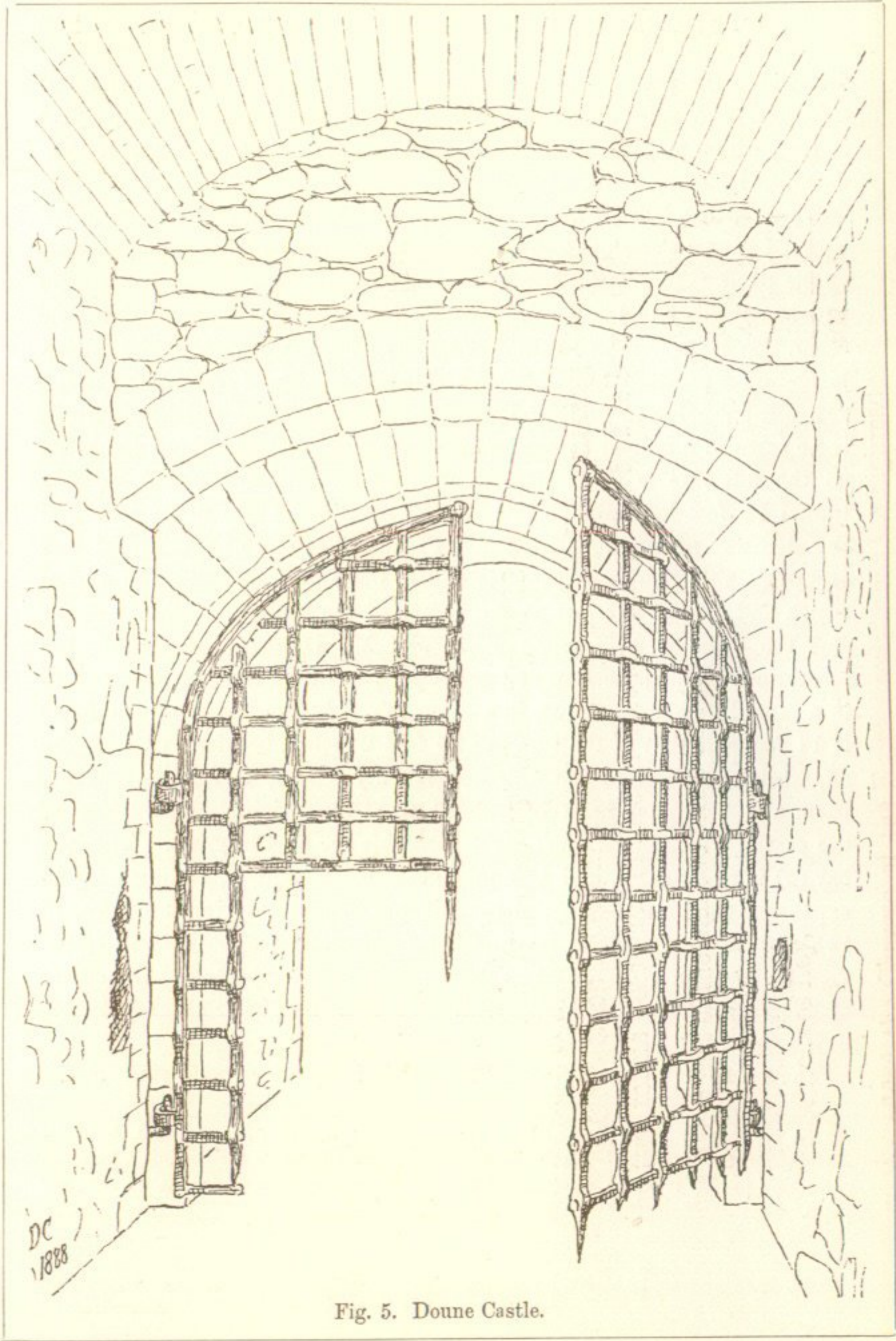


Fig. 5. Doune Castle.

foot of which there is a shallow recess in the wall, probably to receive, when open, a small yett, now removed to Darnick Tower.

It is pleasant to note that Doune Castle has in recent years been saved from further decay by judicious measures sanctioned by the Earl of Moray—an action in striking contrast to the shameful neglect, not merely of ruins, but of castles not yet gone to ruin, by their owners in Scotland generally.

Kinnaird, Perthshire.—This restored and well-maintained, although uninhabited castle, has a large round-headed yett, of which the unique hinges are shown in fig. 1, *h*. There is a modern wooden door; but an ancient one, now at Fingask, is said to have belonged originally to the entrance of Kinnaird. One of the old window grilles from Fingask is made to serve as a door to a smaller upper chamber, containing some curiosities.

Fingask, Perthshire.—In this modernised castle the original entrance has been destroyed, but the yett has fortunately been preserved, and hangs, amid many other curiosities, on the wall of the porch. The yett is remarkable for its unique bolt (fig. 2, *f*), described p. 291.

Braikie, Forfarshire.—The yett in this interesting but neglected ruin is much decayed, the lower inner corner being quite gone. A side view of its doorway on the hinge-side is given in fig. 1, *b*, and a representation of the holes for the bolts and bar on the opposite side (fig. 4, *d*), showing that the fastening staple for the bar still exists—a rare case. It is set obliquely, and how it was used is not quite clear. The object of so large a space for it, partly in line with or even in front of the yett when shut, is also obscure. Six inches in front of the yett is a wooden door, with old-looking hinges. The entrance, as usual in L-shaped castles, is in the angle, and is specially defended near the ground by two deeply splayed, oblong shot holes, one giving a direct and the other a flanking fire. The greater part of the window grilles still remain.

Inverquharity, Forfarshire.—The yett here has several exceptional details. Figs. 6 and 7, from drawings taken by Mr George G. Milne, show that it has three, instead of the usual two hinges; that the bolt-hasps are zigzag; that close behind the yett there are holes for two bars, the one about 18 inches above the other; that half-way between

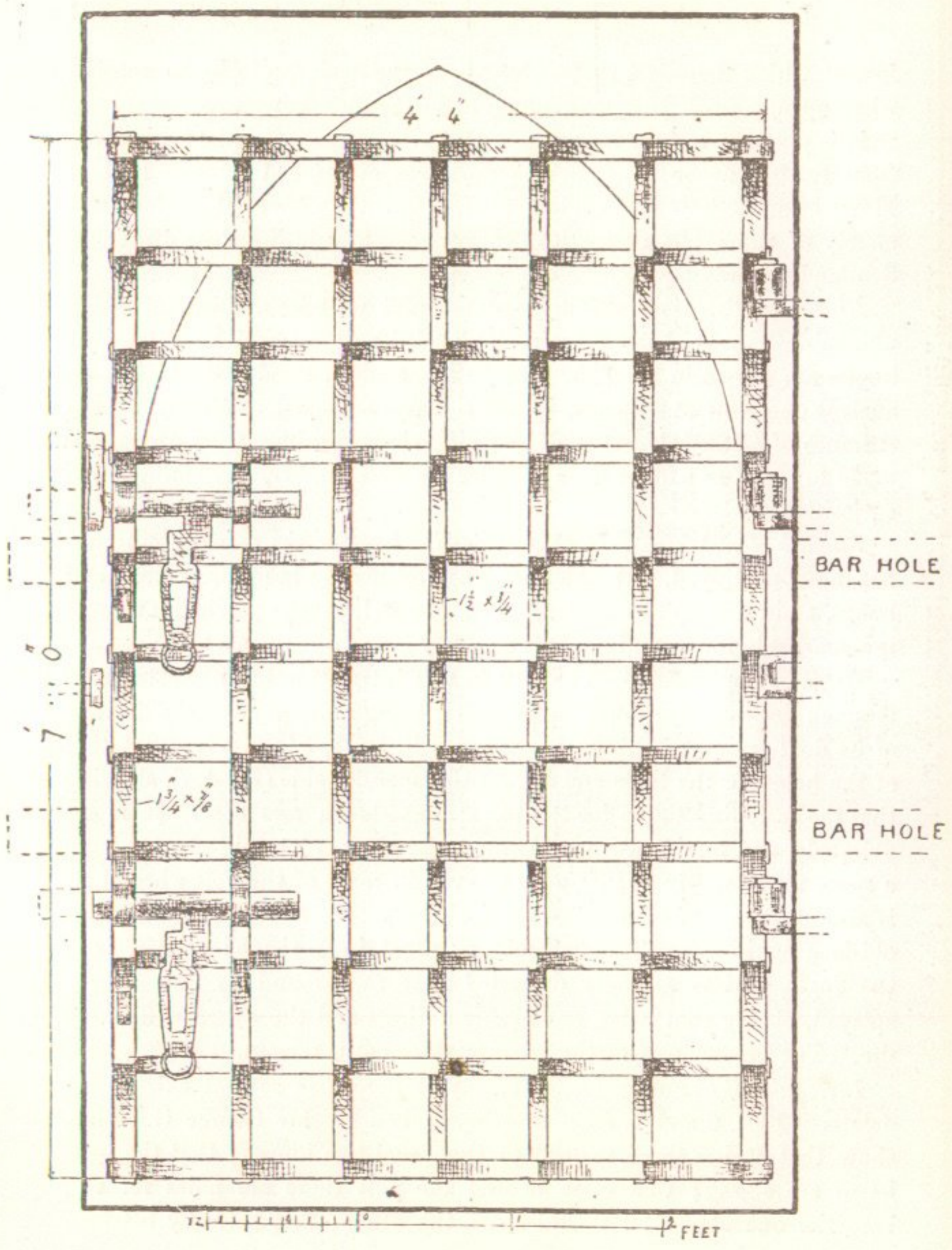


Fig. 6. Inverquharity.

them there is a staple on either side of the wall, as if for some additional bar or chain; lastly, that the upper bolt passed through an iron plate, which covers the hole in the wall, although now the bolt is too low, from the yett having fallen a little on its hinges.

Invermark, Forfarshire.—This yett has been slightly arched at the top to fit the doorway, but the upper frame-bar is gone. A view of part of it by Mr George G. Milne is given in fig. 7.

Tilquhillie, Kincardineshire.—In this yett the uprights project below the last bar, and are pointed. The Rev. Dr Hutchison of Banchory, and Mr Downie, the tenant at Tilquhillie, are of opinion that this arrangement is original; but as the present lowest bar shares in the system of alternate penetration, which never happens in a perfect yett, it is probable that the pointing of the uprights took place after the loss of the lower frame-bar. One of the only three surviving iron bars in Scotland is preserved here. It is about 2 inches square in section, and the tunnel in the wall is just wide enough to contain it. When stretched across, it is close behind the yett. Nothing remains to show how it was fastened.

Craig, Aberdeenshire.—In my former paper a drawing of a yett here, with a description of the castle, by Mr Jervise (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1870, p. 324), is noticed. On making inquiries about this yett from the Rev. Dr Hutchison, Banchory, I was surprised to find that his description did not in the least agree with Mr Jervise's drawing, which on further investigation I find to be in reality an accurate representation of the yett at Invermark. The actual Craig yett is round-headed, and is much corroded below, where the uprights project with pointed ends below the lowest bar. It is impossible to tell now whether this construction is original, or is an adaptation, after removal of a corroded lower frame-bar,—most probably the latter, for the reason given under "Tilquhillie." The hasp of the upper bolt has the zigzag form which occurs in a few other instances.

Craigievar, Aberdeenshire.—Mrs Forbes Irvine has obtained for me from the factor on the estate a plan and description of this yett, from which it appears that it is round-headed, and is in tolerable preservation. With the single exception of the yett at Edinburgh Castle, this seems

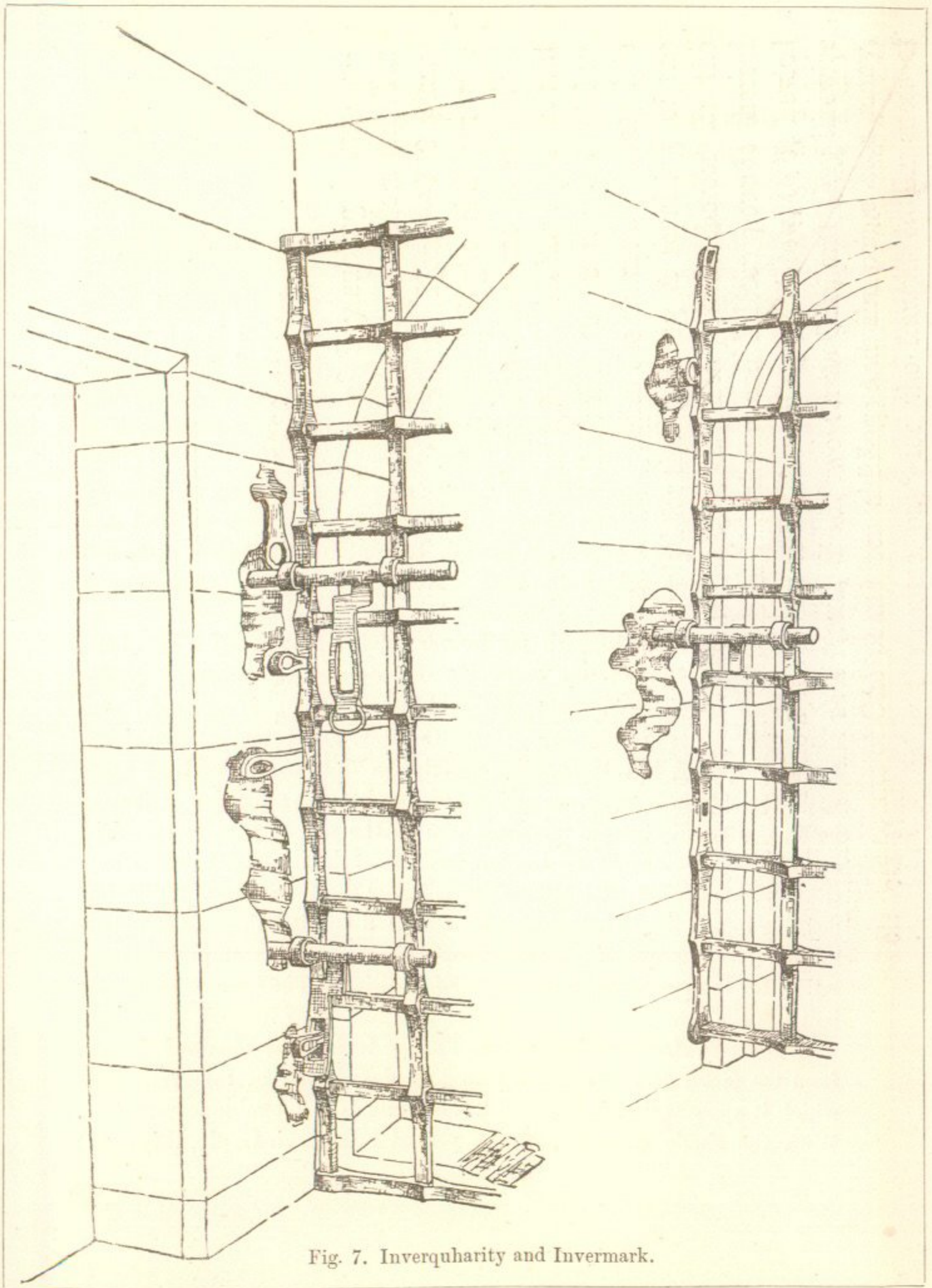


Fig. 7. Inverquharity and Invermark.

to be the only one of the true yetts that retains a padlock. A view of it, from a sketch by Captain Forbes, R.N., is given in fig. 2, *i*.

Balveny, Banffshire.—For the information about the yett at Balveny, I am indebted to Mr J. R. Findlay of Aberlour, and for the drawing (fig. 3) to Miss Findlay. With the exception of the one at Doune, this is the only yett with two leaves. It is round-headed to suit the arched doorway, and measures 8 feet 9 inches by 7 feet 1 inch. The usual alternate penetration of the bars occurs throughout in only one leaf; in the other a number of the cross-bars simply pass behind the uprights, and are riveted to them at the intersections. In both leaves all the bars are similarly riveted to the framework, instead of passing through it. We may conjecture, therefore, that this yett has undergone a comparatively rude reconstruction after being half destroyed. The two hinges for each leaf are of the usual type. There is no bolt, and there is no hole in the wall for the customary bar; but their place is supplied by the singular contrivance of a bifurcated bar turning on hinges fixed on an upright bar of the yett itself, how fastened at the opposite side does not now appear. The yett is withdrawn fully 3 feet within the entrance, behind a rebate; and further out are two other rebates, behind each of which a hinge remains, evidently for two other doors, the first 22 inches in front of the yett, and the second 6½ inches in front of the first.

Cawdor, Nairnshire.—Of three yetts at Cawdor, a double-leaved one at the main entrance from the moat is modern, but the other two are ancient. One of these is in a postern, opening on the moat, in what is believed to be one of the oldest parts of the castle. But the most interesting of the two is situated in the original doorway of the keep. This is the yett which is said to have been brought from Lochindorb Castle, on its demolition in 1455, which was entrusted by James II. to the Thane of Cawdor, who, according to the legend, carried off the yett on his own back. To the kindness of Dr Joass, I am indebted for photographs from which the woodcuts (figs. 8, 9) of this interesting yett are taken. The lower bars are much decayed, and perhaps one may have been altogether lost, as the present lowest bar is 13 inches above the ground. The inside view (fig. 8) is from the doorway of a vaulted

chamber opposite, and shows in particular the three hinges, the form of the bolts and hasps, and the curious hinged bands connecting the yett with the wicket. The outside view (fig. 9) shows through the bars the entrance to the vaulted chamber; on the left the staircase of

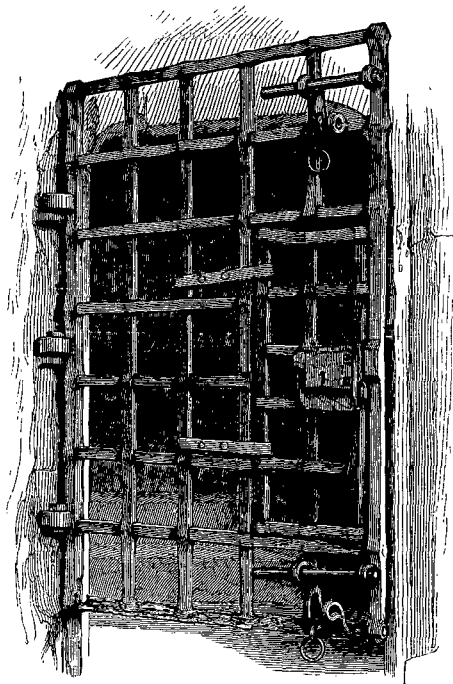


Fig. 8. Cawdor, Inside.

the keep; and on the right, in front, the rybat and one hinge for an outer door, the rybat on the left having been removed or concealed by modern alterations. It is said that the yett has been transferred from the outer to the inner rybat, but it certainly was most unusual to place the iron yett before the wooden door. Originally the doorway gave

directly on the outside, at a considerable height above the ground. This yett is one of the very few furnished with a wicket, the opening for which measures only 38 inches by $16\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The wicket has three upright and six cross bars, frame inclusive; alternating in the usual

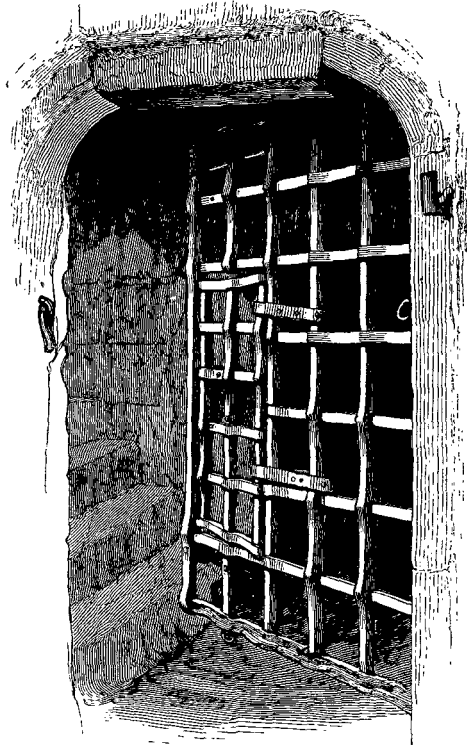


Fig. 9. Cawdor, Outside.

manner, except that the uprights alternate even in the frame. The wicket turns on short pivots, prolongations of its own inner side-bar, through holes in the horizontal bars of the yett, above and below; but two strong bands, looped round the revolving bar and the two adjoining perpendiculars of the yett, act as additional hinges.

The yett has the unusual number of three hinges, and the two bolts are of the ordinary type. The lock plate of the wicket seen in fig. 4 and the key are said to be ancient. There are holes for a cross-bar in the wall behind the yett, nearly on a level with the middle hinge.

Mingary, Argyllshire.—Mr J. J. Dalgleish, the proprietor of this remote castle, informs me that the yett is in an entrance of the courtyard wall, at the water port, in a very exposed place, above and within 20 feet of the sea, which probably accounts for its corroded and mutilated condition, one upright and two cross bars having entirely disappeared, as well as all trace of bolts and hinges, except a mere fragment of one of the latter. Mr Armstrong, factor on the estate, has forwarded an accurate plan of the yett and its doorway. The latter, as shown in fig. 4, *h*, gets narrower outwards, has shallow holes in the walls close behind the original situation of the yett, as if for some kind of bar; and 7 inches in rear of these, the usual deep tunnel and hole for a bar, the object of the position of which, at least a foot behind the yett, is not easy to explain. The yett, to suit its reduced dimensions, has been transferred to the narrower space intended for the wooden door, and it has been turned upside down. The main or landward entrance to the castle courtyard has no yett.

Dingwall, Ross-shire.—The yett now lying in the back yard of the Old Jail and Townhouse of Dingwall is much the smallest in my list, measuring only 4 feet 3½ inches by 3 feet 4 inches. It is perhaps also the most recently constructed one, excluding those made more for ornament than use quite in modern times. Dr Joass, who procured photographs of the yett for me, writes as follows:—"In 1733, the Town Council of Inverness record that, as reported by their deputation, the borough of Dingwall has no jail. The writer in the New Statistical Account, mentions that when peace returned after 1745, a jail was erected and the streets paved. I cannot identify the door to which the yett belonged, but believe that it was built up when the outside stair was altered in 1880, and that it gave access to what was called the dungeon, used as a prison." This does not quite settle the question of date, as there was formerly a castle at Dingwall, from which the yett may have been brought, but its diminutive size certainly favours the

supposition that it was intended for a prison, rather than for the entrance to a castle.

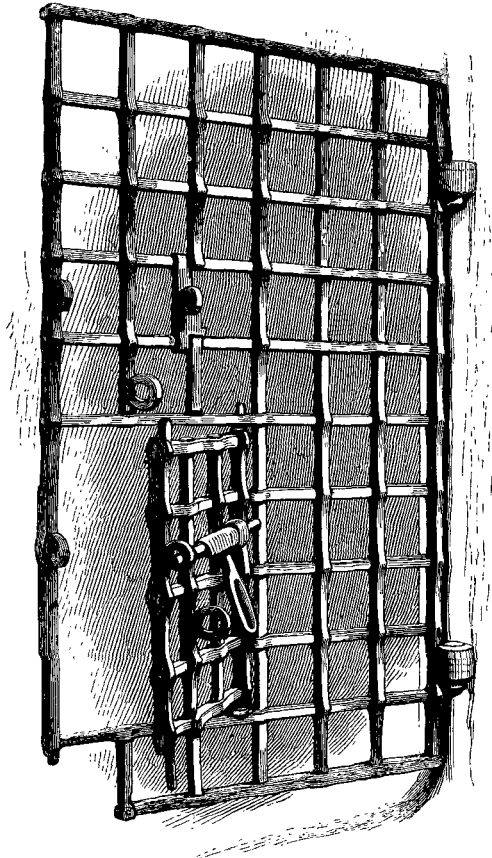


Fig. 10. Dunrobin.

Eilean Dunain, Ross-shire.—The yett of this ancient and once important castle is remarkable for its recent history, Sir Kenneth Matheson

of Ardross having discovered it in 1883, together with some curious old pieces of artillery, in the castle well, where, in all probability, it had lain concealed since 1719, when a ship of war was sent to demolish the castle, after the battle of Glenshiel. A good plan and description of the yett, furnished by Mr Roderick Maclean, factor of Ardross, to Dr Joass, shows that the yett is of the ordinary construction.

Dunrobin, Sutherlandshire.—This large yett (fig. 10, from a photograph taken by Dr Joass) has a very diminutive wicket, measuring only about 30 by 18 inches, pivoted like the Cawdor one; the lower pivot, however, passing through a collar, which protects the bar below from friction. Unlike the Cawdor wicket, there is no alternate penetration in the frame, there are no band-hinges, and instead of locking to the yett, there is a large bolt, squared in the middle, which running through two rings in the wicket, and one on the frame-bar, passed into the wall, and thus closed both wicket and yett. A second bolt higher up, for the yett alone, is lost, but its rings and staple still remain. The Dunrobin yett has apparently suffered violence, being fractured and repaired by braces in several places. As these injuries are all near the bolts, it is probable that the yett may have been forced, perhaps when the castle was taken and spoiled by the rebels in 1746.

The yett is now suspended on the wall of the courtyard, having been removed from its original site, behind the wooden door of the entrance, in consequence of modern alterations.

Dunbeath, Caithness-shire.—Dr Joass has ascertained that the yett of this modernised castle still exists, lying neglected in a garden shed. It is a good deal corroded below, and has been repaired with clasps and rivets.

Yetts of Exceptional Form.

Although the existing defensive iron doors in the entrances of Scottish castles are almost all constructed on the principle adopted in those which we have hitherto been describing, exceptional forms are occasionally met with, but so rarely, that I have not heard of more than three.

Smailholm, Roxburghshire.—The Rev. Dr Joass has obtained for me, through a friend, a description and drawing (fig. 11) by the Hon. H. T.

Hepburne Scott, of an iron gate, measuring 5 feet 8 inches by 3 feet 2 inches, at Smailholm, the defensive purpose of which can hardly be

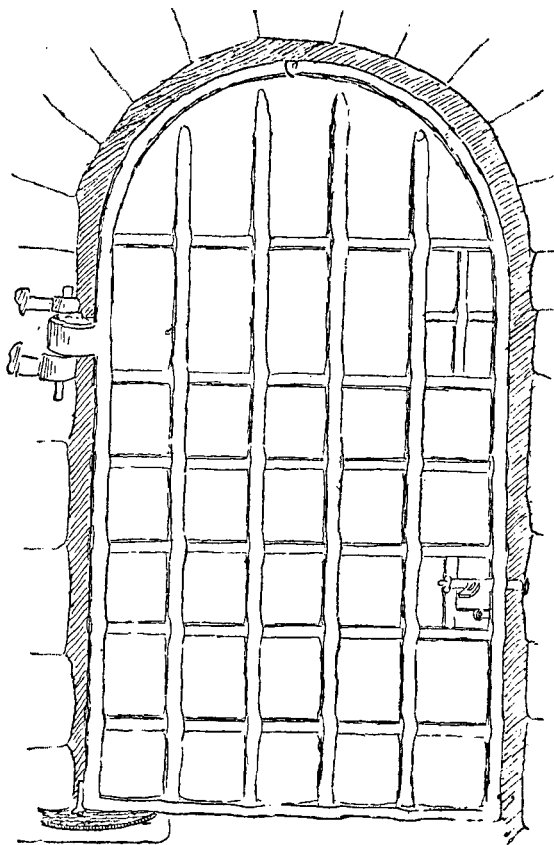


Fig. 11. Smailholm.

doubted, from the massiveness of the bars, those of the frame being $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches square, and the contained bars measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. It differs from the typical form in the absence of alternate penetration, all the

perpendiculars being pierced by the horizontals, and in the pointed ends of the uprights falling short of the rounded head of the frame by some inches. The interspace between the two upper horizontals is also much wider than the interspaces lower down, and one of its compartments is fitted with two bars crossed. The single hinge near the top has the peculiar shape shown in the sketch. Apparently the knuckle attached to the gate is placed between two others, one above and the other below, projected from the wall, and a pin runs through the three. In place of a second hinge, the yett rotates on a pivot upon an iron plate 2 feet long, built into the wall, and resting on a large stone on the floor. The single bolt is 9 inches long and 3 inches in girth. In making out the drawing for publication, I have brought the rather thin bars of the original sketch to the width of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, given in the description.

Duntreath, Stirlingshire.—Two iron gates, which depart entirely from the ordinary type, are preserved, nailed to a side wall of the modernised entrance to the courtyard, at Duntreath. The smaller and more perfect of the two (fig. 12), measuring 5 feet 8 inches by 4 feet $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, is made up of fifteen iron bands or laths, about $\frac{4}{10}$ inch thick, running the whole length of the yett, and varying in width from 3 to 6 or 7 inches. They are riveted to seven flat horizontal bars, 2 inches wide and $\frac{7}{10}$ inch thick, on the inner side of the yett, by rows of bolts, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, with rounded heads about an inch wide, at the outer side, and apparently hammered out at the inner end, so as to fix them.

There are remains of the knuckles of three hinges, and probably there was a fourth. They are formed by bending into a circular form the prolonged ends of the transverse bars. The bolts and their staples are entirely gone. Six holes in the laths, about half-way up,—two others near the top, and two near the bottom,—probably indicate the position of three bolts, of which the middle one must have been very large. A chain hangs from a staple, probably for closing the door from the outside. A rectangular spy-hole, $2\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 inches, closed outside by an iron plate swinging on a nail, was probably closed from the inside also, as there are several rivet holes on a level with it. There is another small triangular hole about 15 inches from the bottom of the

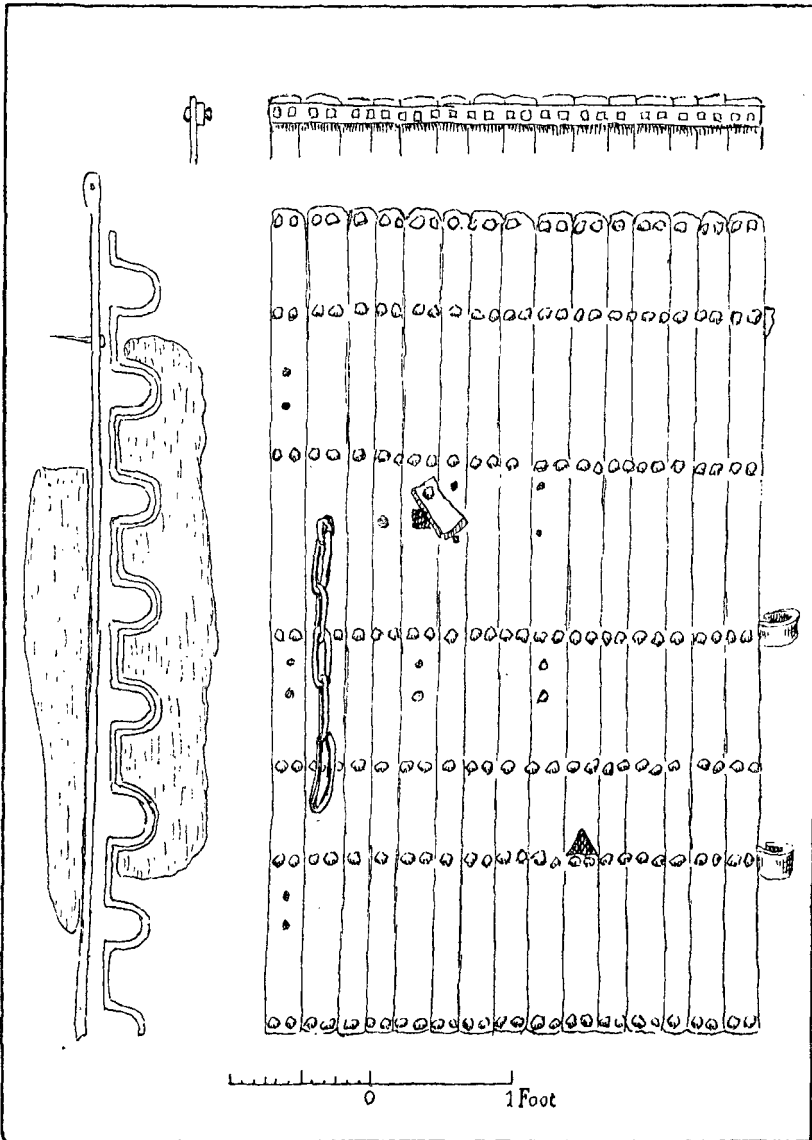


Fig. 12. Duntreath.

yett. The workmanship is rude, the supporting bars being at unequal distances, and not parallel to each other.

The larger Duntreath door, measuring 6 feet 4 inches by 4 feet 6 inches, is constructed on the same principle as the other, but is not in such good condition, the upper three of the nine transverse bars being gone, and several of the laths broken short at the top. A wicket, constructed like the door, occupies 4 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 4 inches of its superficies. The inside view (fig. 13), from a plan furnished by Mr A. R. Duncan, Blairquhosh, shows the remaining staples, besides holes for others, for a bolt to close the wicket and yett to the wall, and near the foot, holes for the staples of another bolt; also the remaining hinge of the wicket, constructed quite differently from the hinges of the true yetts, and somewhat on the principle of the one at Smailholm. A side view of a staple and the adjoining part is given above the yett. The great irregularity in the construction of the door is shown in the drawing.

On the wall beside the doors there hangs an iron padlock (fig. 2, *h*); also, an interesting relic of ancient baronial jurisdiction, the stocks (fig. 12), with accommodation for four pairs of legs. The iron part consists of a lower straight flat bar 6 feet 2 inches long, but broken short at the end, and an upper one bent at 6-inch intervals into little arches for the feet. The lower bar is nailed to a beam, of which little remains. The upper one was apparently kept in its place by another heavy beam with arched cavities to receive the arches of the iron. A considerable part of this beam remains.

A Lost Yett.—The highly interesting and perfectly preserved, although uninhabited, fifteenth century castle of *Affleck, Forfarshire*, retained its ancient iron yett not many years ago, as recorded by Messrs MacGibbon and Ross. But it has mysteriously disappeared. In answer to inquiry by Mr R. C. Walker, F.S.A. Scot., Dr Sim, the present proprietor, regrets that, notwithstanding having offered a reward to any one who could tell him where it was, his efforts to discover the yett proved fruitless.

Modern Yetts.—The interesting and elegant design of the ancient yetts has led to their imitation in recent times, which, if it is liable to cause mistakes as to their origin, is satisfactory as a proof of reviving

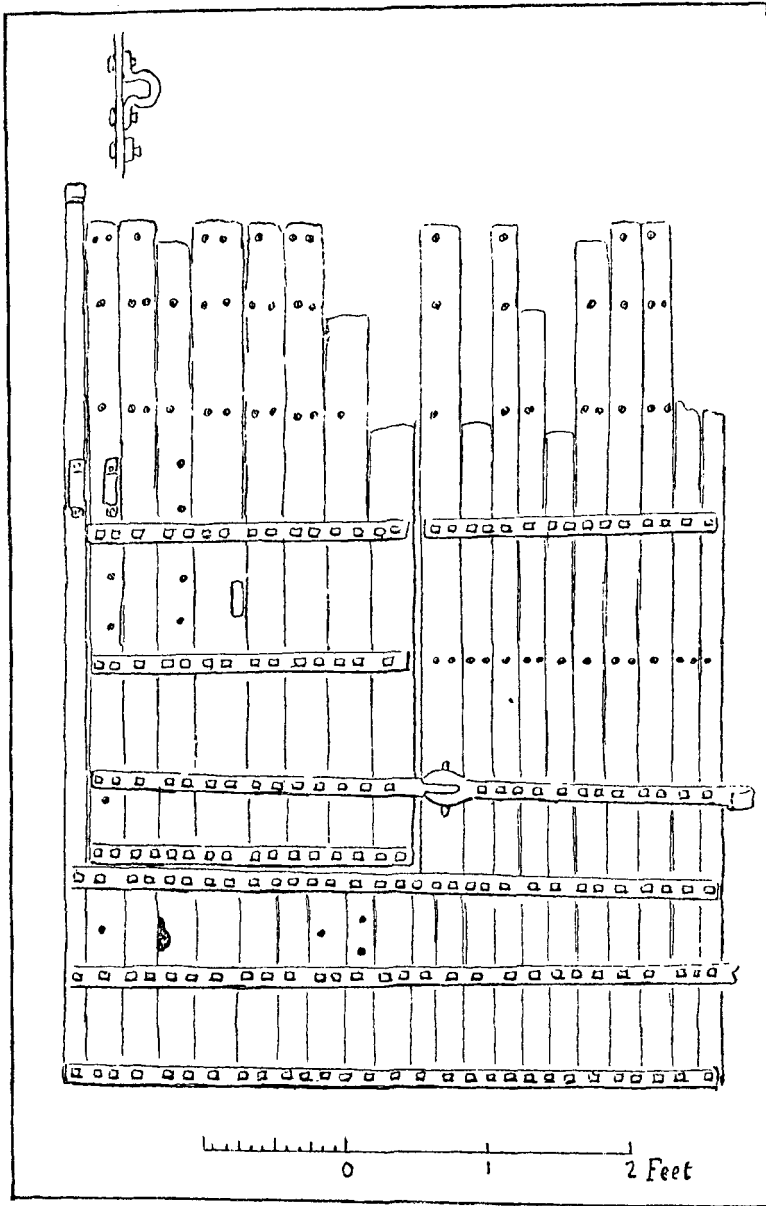


Fig. 13. Duntreath.

taste, and as tending to the perpetuation of the type, many of the existing ancient specimens being quite neglected and rusting rapidly away.

A modern yett at *Cawdor* has already been noticed. It was manufactured at Birmingham, by order of the present Earl of Cawdor. Another has quite recently been placed in *Garth Castle* by Sir Donald Currie. A third has for some time been at *Nunraw, East Lothian*, as I am informed by Mr Carfrae, F.S.A. Scot. A fourth has lately been put up in the repaired tower at *Castle Hill, Manor Vale*. A fifth occupies the place of an ancient one, at the foot of the outside stair in the courtyard of *Doune Castle*.

Lastly, the Rev. Dr Rankine of Muthill, who kindly made inquiries on the spot, sends me the following account of one at *Drummond Castle*:—
 “I found out at once, on authority of an eyewitness (Mr Cameron, warder), that it was made and erected just after he came here thirty-eight years ago,—the maker being a local smith, who went, by direction of the late Lord Willoughby d’Eresby, to Doune to copy the one there. Next I saw the castle mason, who went with the smith to secure accuracy of measurement, &c.” Perhaps this little history may be taken as a proof that the ancient yetts were, or at least might easily have been, of local manufacture.

IV. HISTORY AND DISTRIBUTION.

The period when the iron yetts first came into use cannot be precisely determined. A decree fulminated against them by the Scottish Privy Council, quoted in my former paper, proves that they were in universal use in castles and fortified mansions in 1616. I do not know any earlier indubitable historical mention of them, but it is very probable that they are referred to in a clause of the licence, dated 1444, for the building of Cawdor Castle, which confers the right *portisque clausuris ferreis fundandi et in altum erigendi*. It is true the latter words seem to point to the portecullis rather than to the yett; but, on the other hand, if the portecullis were intended, the single word *cataracta*, if in customary use, would surely have been employed; and in favour of the yett we have the evidence of the castle itself, as there is no provision for a portecullis in it. The probable use of the yett is thus carried back to the

middle of the fifteenth century. But a still earlier date may be claimed on reasonable grounds. It seems almost certain that some kind of iron defence would always be necessary to prevent the entrances of castles from being easily forced by fire. In the earliest Scottish castles this requirement was fulfilled by the portcullis, as I find in Messrs MacGibbon and Ross's standard work, that of the fifteen castles built before 1300, eight are mentioned as retaining portcullis-grooves, the entrances of the others being too ruinous to show whether they had them or not. But the use of the portcullis seems to have been almost entirely confined to comparatively early times and to the larger class of castles. Thus, among the twelve fourteenth-century castles, which were all of small size, we find in the work just cited that, with the doubtful exception of Craigmillar, not one is mentioned as having portcullis-grooves; and if they reappear in the fifteenth century, it is only for a brief period at the beginning of it, and in the largest class of castles, grooves remaining in fourteen out of seventeen of these, all built early in the fifteenth century; while in fifty-two smaller castles, built between 1400 and 1542, they occur in Borthwick alone, and there only in the gateway of the court. Indeed, it is doubtful if Scottish castles were constructed to have the portcullis after about 1420; the only apparent later instances among nearly two hundred fortified structures, recorded by Messrs MacGibbon and Ross, being in the gateway at Edinburgh Castle, attributed to Regent Morton, 1574, and in the pend of Castle Sinclair, 1606,—instances so isolated as to suggest that even in these instances the masonry of the grooves, at least, must be of much more ancient date.

From all this it appears that the portcullis was confined to the larger castles, that it was temporarily abandoned in the fourteenth century, and that it ceased entirely, or almost entirely, to be used early in the fifteenth century. Granting, therefore, that some kind of iron defence was always necessary, and as there is no sign remaining of any other kind, we are almost driven to the conclusion that the "yett" must have fulfilled that important duty, even as early as the fourteenth century.

Further evidence in favour of considerable antiquity may be derived from the dates of the castles in which the existing examples are found. Considering the much larger number of recent compared with more

ancient castles, and that the older yetts are much more likely than the more recent ones to have disappeared from destruction or decay, it is a fair presumption in favour of antiquity¹ if any considerable numbers are found in the older castles. Now, adopting Messrs MacGibbon and Ross's carefully ascertained dates, I find that of thirty-seven castles which still retain their yetts *in situ*, five date in whole or part anterior to the fifteenth century, nine are in whole or part of the fifteenth, eighteen of the sixteenth, and five of the seventeenth centuries. Thus a considerable proportion of these yetts are found among the comparatively small number of castles dating in part at least from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

It is quite possible that the yett was in use along with the portcullis. At Doune we have an example of an existing yett, set about a foot behind the portcullis grooves; of course, it is impossible to say whether the two were contemporary, but it seems probable that the surviving *iron* bar, of proved antiquity, must have been intended to support an *iron* yett of some kind or another.

It would be interesting to know whether the Scottish portcullis was constructed on the same principle as the yett. Unfortunately, as far as I can learn, not a single Scottish portcullis remains, unless it be at the bottom of Loch Doon, where, according to Patterson's *Ayrshire Families*, one could be seen in calm weather some years ago. This is no longer possible, however, as the loch has since been raised 8 or 10 feet. I am informed by the Rev. Mr Hendrie of Dalmellington, that two old boatmen have seen the object when the water was very low, and that they call it "an iron gate." He also informs me that there are portcullis grooves in the castle. The question what this "iron gate" may be can only be solved by restoring it to the light—a feat not likely to be undertaken, when the castle itself is being allowed to go to destruction.

It is easier to assign a period when the manufacture of yetts must have ceased. With the increase of respect for law and order, and the dying out of family feuds, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the cumbrous yetts would gradually be disused, and as a matter of fact the most recent castle in which they are found is Drumlanrig, which

¹ The antiquity, that is to say, not of the individual yetts now existing, but of the yett system of defence.

dates from about 1680. Even in this instance, the large yett has undergone mutilation to fit the entrance, and may have belonged originally to an older edifice. Two of the yetts in my list may possibly have been constructed for actual use even in the eighteenth century. Possibly the one at the Crown Room in Edinburgh Castle was specially made to protect the regalia when jealously shut up in 1707, after the Union; but it may be much older, for it had long been the custom to keep the regalia in the castle, as we learn from the following statement, of date 1638, in *Baillie's Letters*, quoted in "Papers relative to the Regalia of Scotland:"—"Dalkeith in the treasurer's sight was taken The crown, sceptre, and sword, which (I know not how) had been transported there, were, with all reverence, brought back by our nobles to their proper place in the castle of Edinburgh." The Dingwall yett may possibly be little more than a century and a half old, as it seems to have been used for the jail there, where apparently, as already related (p. 308), no jail existed till 1735, and its small size is opposed to the theory that it may have been originally the yett of Dingwall Castle, or some other fortified edifice in the neighbourhood.

Distribution.—The typical yett is distributed widely over both the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland. It is somewhat remarkable, however, although probably purely accidental, that with exception of the neglected specimen in the wood at Dunlop, and possibly another at the bottom of Loch Doon, the five western lowland counties, Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigtown, and Kirkcudbright, as well as the neighbouring county of Bute, appear to be destitute of yetts. In my former paper I have shown that the Scottish type of yett is not met with in England, even on the Borders, and that, so far as I could learn, it is unknown in France and on the Continent, although the principle of alternate penetration of the bars in the four quarters is applied to window grilles in North Italy and the Tyrol.

In Scotland, the grilles which fortified every window of the old castles, and which must have given them a very gloomy and prison-like character, were universally constructed on the same principle as the yetts, if we may judge from the numerous surviving examples.

I cannot conclude without thanking the gentlemen already named as

authorities, and particularly the Rev. Dr Joass, who generously placed at my disposal a valuable contribution on the five most northern yetts in the kingdom. But for the kind co-operation of these gentlemen, this work would have fallen far short of the measure of fulness and accuracy which I hope it has attained.