

## III.

NOTES ON THREE HOARDS OF COINS RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND. BY GEORGE MACDONALD, M.A., LL.D., CURATOR OF COINS.

I. A HOARD OF LATE ROMAN COINS FOUND IN WIGTOWNSHIRE.

On 29th October 1913 an interesting discovery of Roman coins was made at Balgreggan Quarry, in the parish of Stoneykirk. Three labourers in the employment of the Wigtownshire County Council were engaged in stripping the turf and soil from the top of the rock, when their attention was attracted by one or two small objects of an unusual character lying amidst the loose earth. On being picked up and washed, these objects proved to be coins, which had been concealed in a small earthenware jug. As the result of a careful search, many more were recovered; 119 in all, along with some fragments of the jug, were voluntarily handed over to the Crown authorities. From the archæological point of view, the hoard presented some novel features, so far as Scotland was concerned, and it was accordingly decided that it should be retained intact for the Museum. At a later date it transpired that, over and above the 119 that had been surrendered, there were a few—six, to be quite accurate—which had found their way into private hands. I was kindly allowed to examine these, in order that this record might be complete.

The fragments of pottery showed that the jug (fig. 1) had been made of whitish material, covered with a black or dark-brown slip. When complete, it had apparently been about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. No part of the bottom remains; but enough of the rest has survived to enable the accompanying sectional sketch to be executed under Mr A. O. Curle's direction. The great majority of the coins were, like the vessel that had contained them, in exceedingly poor con-

dition. The task of identification was often far from easy, but in the end all save four were deciphered with practical certainty. The bulk of them were "second brass," but there were two examples of

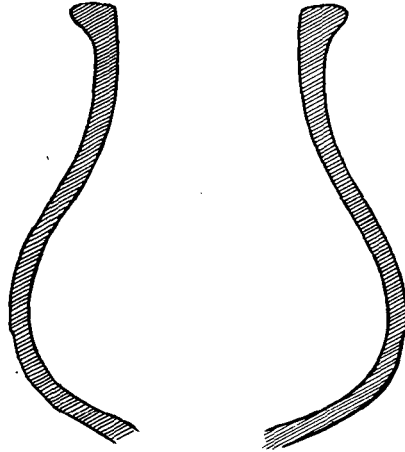


Fig 1. Section of the Jug in which the Coins were contained. (3.)

"first brass" and a small sprinkling of "third." The following list indicates their dates and distribution:—

Helena (306-328 A.D.)	1
Constantine the Great (306-337 A.D.)	2
Constantius (335-361 A.D.)	31
Constans (337-350 A.D.)	24
Magentius (350-353 A.D.)	61
Decentius (351-353 A.D.)	2
Uncertain	4
	125

The oldest coin—if the term may be applied to what is now a mere fragment—is that assigned to Helena, mother of Constantine the Great; for, of the two coins of Constantine himself, one was struck after his death, while the other, which has for its obverse type a head

of the city of Constantinople, was certainly not issued before 330 A.D. On the other hand, it will be noted that nearly one-half of the pieces in the hoard bore the name of Magnentius. Clearly the centre of gravity cannot be far removed from the brief reign of that usurper. It is, of course, conceivable that some of the coins of Constantius may be later. Their relatively small number, however, points in the opposite direction, particularly when taken in connection with the absence of any examples of Gallus, appointed Cæsar in 351, or of Julian the Apostate, who succeeded him in 354. Probably, therefore, the latest pieces are the two coins of Decentius, and a small group of the coins of Magnentius, the inscriptions on which make allusion to the appointment of Decentius as Cæsar in 351.

These facts seem to justify the assumption that concealment took place in or about 354. Under normal circumstances it would be dangerous to draw so precise an inference as to the date of burial. But under the later Roman Empire the conditions of coinage were peculiar. Statistics of finds prove beyond question that the currency changed with extraordinary rapidity, and that it must have been rare indeed for common coins to continue in circulation for so long as twenty or thirty years. Despite spasmodic efforts at reform, the epoch was one of steadily progressive monetary deterioration. The quality of each emperor's coins was worse than that of those of his predecessor, with the result that Gresham's Law was in perpetual operation—the bad money driving out the good.

Hoards similar in composition, though much larger in size, have previously been found in England, as at Cobham Park in Kent (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1885, p. 108 ff.), and more recently at Croydon (*ibid.*, 1905, p. 36 ff.). But this is the first properly authenticated account of anything of the sort from the north of Hadrian's Wall, and the question naturally arises whether it adds anything definite to our knowledge of the history of our country during the obscure period

to which it belongs. There may be a temptation to regard it as indicative of a Roman occupation of the Mull of Galloway about the middle of the fourth century of our era. But, while it would not be inconsistent with such an hypothesis, it forms far too slender a foundation to support it. Roman coins passed current in regions where the writ of the Roman Government never ran. Hoards have been found in India. In Germany, as Tacitus tells us in a well-known passage, the semi-civilised tribes beyond the frontier employed the Roman currency freely. Doubtless the same thing happened in Britain. The barrier that stretched from Tyne to Solway was not like the wall of a beleaguered city. In normal times traders would pass and re-pass it frequently, carrying with them a stock of imperial money, as well as a supply of easily transported merchandise like the earthenware jug in which the Balgreggan hoard was originally hidden away.

## II. A HOARD OF EDWARD PENNIES FOUND IN KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE.

On 4th November 1913 a large hoard of Edward pennies and contemporary pieces was discovered on the farm of Craigengillan, in the Parish of Carsphairn, by a lad named James W. M'Ilwraith, who was engaged in cleaning surface drains. The precise spot was a marshy hollow on the Goat Craig Hill, about a mile and a half from the present farmhouse, and the coins, which had been stored in an earthenware jug, were less than a foot below the surface. The jug was unfortunately broken into small pieces before M'Ilwraith noticed it, but the fragments recovered were sufficiently numerous to leave no doubt as to its shape and size. I am indebted to Mr A. O. Curle for the accompanying sketch (fig. 2), which shows that the type was one common in the fourteenth century.

The total number of coins collected by the original finder, and handed

over by him to the Exchequer, was 2209. A few others—thirteen in all—were subsequently picked up on the ground. I have had an



Fig. 2. Jug in which the Coins were contained. ( $\frac{1}{3}$ .)

opportunity of examining the whole 2222, with the result that I have been able to classify them as follows:—

SCOTTISH SINGLE LONG-CROSS PENNIES.	
Alexander III . . . . .	60
John Balliol . . . . .	9
Robert Bruce . . . . .	3
LONG-CROSS PENNY OF HENRY III.	
Oxford . . . . .	1
PENNIES OF EDWARD I., II. (AND III. ?).	
<i>(a) English.</i>	
London . . . . .	1027
Canterbury . . . . .	590
Durham (with ecclesiastical m.m.) . . . . .	125
Durham (without ecclesiastical m.m.) . . . . .	50
York (ecclesiastical) . . . . .	3

York (ordinary)	46
Robert de Hadelie (Bury St Edmunds)	5
Bury St Edmunds	72
Bristol	47
Newcastle	26
Lincoln	16
Hull	8
Chester	6
Exeter	2
Berwick	44
Doubtful	2

*(b) Irish.*

Dublin	24
Waterford	7

## FOREIGN STERLINGS.

Various Mints	51
---------------	----

The great majority of the Scottish coins were in good condition, and some interesting minor varieties were represented. The number retained for the Museum was fourteen. The Edward pennies (only one of which—a Waterford specimen, without the triangle—was retained) furnished no new evidence for the chronological arrangement of this difficult series, although there was abundant confirmation of most of the inferences drawn from the find made in 1911 at Blackhills (see *Proceedings*, xlv. p. 569 ff., and more particularly *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1913, pp. 57-118). It will be noted that the two hoards came from the same county, and that they are very similar in size and in composition, the main difference being that at Craigengillan the Scottish pieces were, roughly, twice as numerous, and the foreign sterlings, roughly, four times as numerous, as at Blackhills. The sterlings from Craigengillan, seven of which were added to the National Collection, included three of a class usually believed to have been struck by Edward III. in Aquitaine, with bust in profile, as well as four assigned by Chautard to Thomas de Bourlemont, Bishop of Toul from 1330 to 1353. If these attributions are

correct, the Craigengillan treasure must have been concealed subsequent to the year 1330. In discussing that from Blackhills I suggested 1320, or a year or two later, as the probable date of deposit. As it seems probable that both finds, as well as the one which came to light at Lochmaben in 1904 (see *Proceedings*, xxxix. p. 403 ff., and *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1905, p. 63 ff.), were hidden away more or less simultaneously, we are confronted by two alternatives. Either the coins were concealed during the troublous times that marked the early years of David II.'s reign, or their burial must be connected with the wars of 1322-23. If the latter be chosen, two consequences follow. The coins which Chautard assigns to Thomas de Bourlemont must belong, not to his time, but to that of Ferry IV., Duke of Lorraine (1312-28)—the view to which I inclined in my discussion of the Lochmaben find (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1905, p. 82); and the earliest of the profile sterlings of Aquitaine must have been issued, not by Edward III., but by his predecessor Edward II.

### III. A HOARD OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY COINS FOUND AT AYR.

On 18th February 1914 a fairly large hoard of coins, chiefly sixteenth-century pieces, came to light at Ayr. They had apparently been concealed in a recess in the wall on the ground floor of an old building in High Street, which was being demolished to make way for a new Y.M.C.A. Institute, and their presence was first revealed to the workmen by the clink of metal among the falling debris. There was no trace of any bag or purse, or of any containing box or jar. So far as could be judged, the recess must have been five or six feet above the floor level. The coins, which numbered 692 in all, were handed over to the Crown authorities and were forwarded to the National Museum by the Exchequer for examination and report. For the most part they represented very common varieties, but a few

were retained for the coin cabinet on account of their good preservation. The following is a detailed list :—

*A. SILVER.*

MARY AND DARNLEY.

Ryals (1566)	3
--------------	---

MARY.

Ryal (1567)	1
Two-thirds Ryal (1567)	1
One-third Ryal (1567)	1

JAMES VI.

Ryal (1567)	1
-------------	---

*B. BILLON.*

JAMES IV.

Placks	107
--------	-----

JAMES V.

Placks	53
Bawbees	54
Half-bawbees	3

MARY AND FRANCIS.

Non-sunts	37
-----------	----

MARY.

Placks	108
Bawbees (Edinburgh Mint)	306
„ (Stirling Mint)	6
Half-bawbees	11
	<hr/>
	692