IV.

THE EXCAVATION OF COULL CASTLE, ABERDEENSHIRE.

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I. Historical Introduction.

The ruins of Coull Castle stand on a prominent knoll of red granite about 200 yards south of the parish kirk of that name, in the south-eastern corner of the Howe of Cromar. Its position is a most commanding one. The view embraces the entire Howe, one of the most beautiful districts in Aberdeenshire; a fertile basin enclosed by a fine range of hills which, commencing in Mortlich (1248 feet), immediately behind the castle, sweeps round by the north through Pressendye (2032 feet) to culminate westward in the noble mountain of Morven (2862 feet)—Byron's "Morven of Snow"—whose great bulk and fine outline (seen in the background, fig. 15) lend character to the whole district. Through this Howe flows the Tarland Burn, sweeping in a deep narrow gully past the west side of the kirk and castle. At present the burn appears a more formidable defence to the castle on this side than it really was in the Middle Ages, for its channel was deepened and canalised early in the last century, in order to drain the flats below the village of Tarland.[1] Previous to that operation these flats were largely marshland, and are still known as Bogmore. A yet earlier stage in the physiography of the district is revealed by the large trees—oak, fir, and alder—which are frequently dug up in the soil of this ancient marsh, sometimes at a depth of 8 feet below the present surface.[2]

[1] Mr W. Middleton Stewart, Aberdeen, informs me from private sources that this drainage was effected in 1840. In the *New Statistical Account* for the parish (vol. xii. p. 958), written in August 1842, reference is made to the operation. "There is a considerable extent of level ground in the centre of the parish, called Bogmore. It consists of alluvial deposit on moss. At one period it was generally covered with water, and formed a disagreeable, unhealthy swamp. By recent draining the greater part of it has been brought into cultivation, the remainder has been converted into good pasture, and the climate has been greatly improved." Even previous to this work of drainage, however, the bottom-land cannot all have been marsh, for we are told by Spalding (*Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and in England*, vol. ii. p. 472) that on Sunday, 11th May 1645, the Covenanting Lieutenant-General Baillie "marchis to Cromar, and campis betuixt the kirkis of Coull and Tarlan."

[2] In the *New Statistical Account*, cited above, occurs the following passage: "The oak appears to have once flourished here, a specimen of enormous size having been recently dug up on the farm of Wester Coull, and two large beams of oak, rudely joined together by blocks of wood, were lately found in a piece of mossy ground near the manse." It is a great pity that the exact place of this discovery had not been specified, as the description of mortised woodwork at once suggests a crannog.

I am indebted to Mr Charles B. Bisset, M.A., B.Sc., for the following geological note on the site of the castle:—

"The castle is built on a boss of granitic rock which occurs where the flat land of the Howe of Cromar begins to rise and grade into the drift-covered slopes of the Hill of Mortlich. The rock-mass is a marginal offshoot from a tongue of granite extending roughly from Tillylodge to the summit of Mortlich Hill. It appears as a rocky eminence in the valley which the Tarland Burn, emerging from the flat, has cut in the surrounding glacial deposits. The burn traverses the rock in a steep-walled gorge, at the entrance to which it formed a loch. On leaving the gorge it spread out to form a marsh—some indications of which still remain. The loch and marsh have been drained by an artificial deepening of the stream's channel, apparently to a depth of about 20 feet. Thus the site stands out from the valley side, and sloped steeply down, in its former condition, to a loch on the north-west, to a rock-gorge occupied by a stream on the south-west and south, and to marshy ground on the south-east. On the north and north-east the rock-surface slopes up and merges into gently rising ground. Artificial protection has been got here by the rock-cut ditch. The site, though not the highest point in the immediate neighbourhood, is not actually dominated by any other eminence. Buildings of any height would ensure an adequate view in all directions."

Coull Kirk is one of the oldest Christian sites in Aberdeenshire, being a foundation of St Nathalan (died 8th January 678), whose centre of influence was at Tullich, further up the Dee valley, where a fine collection of Celtic sculptured stones still marks the early importance of the place.[1] Between 1188 and 1199, William the Lyon granted the church of Cul in Mar, with its lands, teinds, oblations, etc., to his new foundation, the great Abbey of St Thomas the Martyr at Arbroath.[2] The present kirk dates from 1792, but occupies the ancient site, and is correctly oriented, or nearly so (8° S. of E.). Its rather fine Renaissance belfry belongs to the previous church, and houses a Dutch bell dating from 1642.[3] At Coull, as elsewhere, we see the mediæval church and castle side by side, representing respectively the ecclesiastical and the civil *nuclei* of the

[1] For St Nathalan and Tullich Kirk see my article in *The Deeside Field*, pp. 16-8. The Breviary of Aberdeen says that Nathalan founded the churches of *Tullicht*, *Bothelim* (Bethelnie =Both-Nathalan, the cell or church of Nathalan), and *Colle*. Bishop A. P. Forbes (*Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, p. 419) says that *Colle* is Cowie, near Stonehaven, and quotes a rhyme said to be in use among the fishermen there in regard to "Saint Nauchlan's hoard" at Cowie. On the other hand, the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen" (1732), paraphrasing the Aberdeen Breviary, says that Nathalan "built the churches of Bethelny, Cowl, and Tullich," and elsewhere states that "Cowl Church was dedicated to St Nachlan"—*Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 131, 633. The evidence associating Coull with St Nathalan, apart altogether from the geographical probability, seems fairly good.

[2] *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. ii. p. 27. The names of the *villæ* in the parish are thus given in a marginal note on the charter: Ester Tochres, Wester Tochres, Ochter Cule, Galaun, Davata de Kule.

[3] The inscription on the bell is as follows: "SOLI DEO GLORIA · MICHAEL BURGERHUYS M(e) F(ecit) 1642." A shield bears the Ross arms (a chevron between three water-budgets), with the inscription "INSIGNIA · ALEXANDRI · ROSSII · IN · MIL · DE · COVL · ME · DONANTIS."

parochial organisation introduced by the Anglo-Norman immigrants into Scotland in the twelfth century. Close eastward (see map, fig. 1) is the farm of Mains of Coull, representing the ancient demesne land attached to the castle; further down the Tarland Burn is the site of the Mill of Coull; while at about three-quarters of a mile to the south-east, on a spur of Mortlich, is the Gallowhill (seen in the background, fig. 21), a prominent knoll upon whose summit the gibbet, standing starkly forth with its ghastly burden against the morning sky, must have been a grim

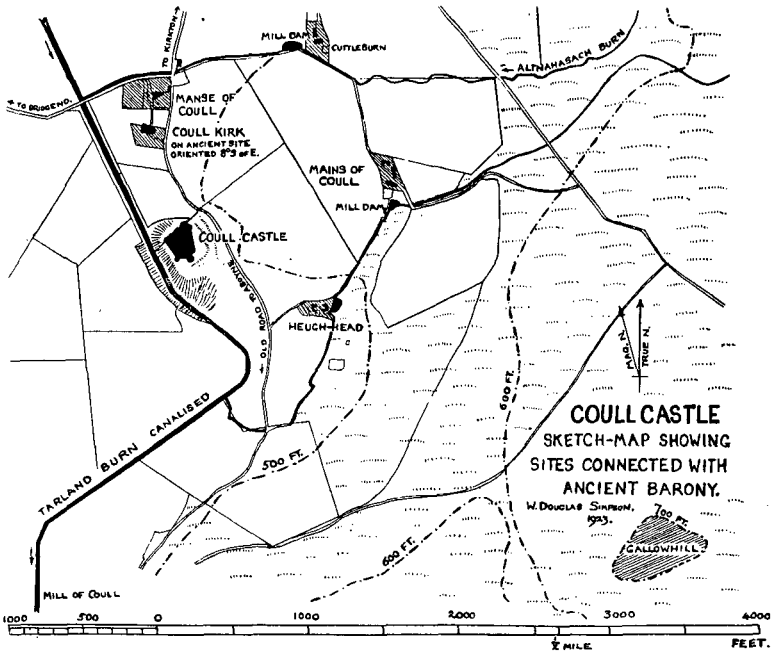


Fig. 1. Map of Coull Castle and Neighbourhood.

and constant reminder, to the *villeins* in the Howe, of the reality of "Baron's Law."

The Castle of Coull was the great stronghold of the Durwards, the hereditary Door-wards (*le Uissier*, *Hostiarius*) of Scotland, the powerful family who in the middle of the thirteenth century held the destiny of the kingdom in their hands. The family name was properly de Lundin (? in Fifeshire), but their origin is not known. They came to Coull as the result of a long dispute between Thomas de Lundin or le Durward and Duncan, Earl of Mar, from whom de Lundin claimed the earldom through his mother, a daughter of Orabila, Countess of Mar, and her first husband,

Gilchrist. The dispute was settled apparently about 1228,[1] and it seems that the Durwards then acquired a great portion of the Mar earldom, including the southern half of the Howe of Cromar, and stretching in the one direction northwards to Alford and in the other eastward to Skene. Their territories also extended down Deeside to Invercanny, and included the Feugh valley at least as far as Strachan. The main stronghold of this wide domain, known as the barony of O'Neill, was at Coull, where doubtless Thomas de Lundin, soon after he obtained the lands, erected his powerful stone castle of the *enceinte* type, just then coming into vogue in Scotland. At Lumphanan and Strachan the Durwards also possessed peels or fortresses of the earlier type, consisting of earthen mounds surrounded by a fosse and carrying on their summits timber buildings enclosed by a stockade.[2]

Little is known about Thomas le Durward, but he evidently took a close personal interest in his northern lordship, for we know that he constructed a bridge over the Dee at Kincardine-O'Neill.[3] About 1231 he was succeeded by his son Colin, who, as Lord O'Neill, is said to have received a royal charter from Alexander II. confirming to him the lands of Coull, Kincragy, and le Corss.[4] Colin in turn gave place before 1233 to his brother Alan,[5] one of the great figures in Scottish history during the thirteenth century. Alan Durward married Marjorie, an illegitimate daughter of Alexander II.; and for some time during the minority of that King's son he was Regent of Scotland. He died either in 1268 or in 1275, and his lands were divided among his three daughters. The barony of O'Neill, however, does not seem to have fallen under his succession, but reverted to the Crown, and was afterwards granted to the Earl of

[1] Among an inventory of documents handed over by Edward I. to John Balliol in 1292 occurs the following entry: "*Item in uno sacculo existente in eadem maletta veteri, una pixis sigillata, in qua est composicio inter Comitem de Mar et Thomam Ostiarium, olim facta.*" No doubt this was the same document as the one contained in the roll of recognitions including amongst other things, "*negocium tangens comitem de Marr et Thomam le Usser*," found among the records of the Treasury at Edinburgh Castle in 1291. See *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. i., Appendix to Preface, pp. 6, 10.

[2] About the history of the Castlehill at Strachan little authentic information is forthcoming. It is figured in Dr A. Bremner's *The Physical Geology of the Dee Basin*, p. 71. On the other hand, the Peel of Lumphanan was a stronghold of great consequence in its day, and was visited by Edward I. on 21st July 1296. The best historical notice of this important moated mound is that contributed in 1843 to the *New Statistical Account* of the parish (vol. xii. pp. 1089–91, and 1095) by Dr Joseph Robertson—a full and accurate account, forecasting in remarkable fashion modern conclusions regarding the age and purpose of such *mottes*.

[3] "*Hospitali . . . sito iuxta pontem quem pater meus fecit construi super Dee.*" *Confirmatio Alani Hostiarij data hospitali de Kyncardyn*, 3rd March 1233 (*Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, vol. ii. pp. 268–9).

[4] *Castles of Aberdeenshire*, p. 23. I have been unable to trace the authority for this statement. The date given, 1234, appears inconsistent with the fact that Alan Durward's charter to the Hospital of Kincardine, quoted above, proves him to have held the lands in the previous year.

[5] Colin is designated Alan's brother in a charter of Logie Durno, 1251—*Chartulary of Lindores*, ed. Bishop J. Dowden, p. 86.

Fife. On the death of Alexander III. in 1286, Duncan, Earl of Fife, was appointed a co-Regent of Scotland, but on 25th September 1288 he was assassinated. Thereafter his widow, Isabella, continued to hold his domains. On the Thursday before the Feast of All Saints, 1299 ("*le Dymeigne procheyn deuant la Feste de Toutz Seintz en lan dil incarnacioun nostre Seignur mil e deus centz nonant e neefe*"), Countess Isabella executed a deed conveying to Sir John de Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny ("*monsieur Johan de Hastingis, Seignur de Bergeueneye*"), her lands of Coull and Lumphanan with their pertinents in the shire of Aberdeen ("*Koule e Lunfanan oue les apurtenances en conte de Aberdene*"), along with other properties in Scotland and England. The grant is stated to be in discharge of a debt which the Countess is unable to meet because of the war in Scotland and the depredations of Sir Herbert de Morham, who has seized her goods and chattels ("*per la greuance de la guere Descoce et dil rauisment Sir Herberd de Morham qi mes biens e mes chateux moi rauiste*"). On his part, Sir John de Hastings agrees to pay the Countess £80 sterling per year for life. This transaction received the approval of Edward I., who on 1st November 1299 issued in letters patent his writ of *inspeximus*.[1] We obtain an insight into Sir Herbert de Morham's misuse of the Countess in a writ of the English King, under date 22nd April 1299, directing a jury to inquire into "the charges brought by Johanna de Clare, Countess of Fife, against Herbert de Morham of Scotland, that while she and her retinue under the King's safe-conduct were on their way to England, he laid wait for them between Stirling and Edinburgh, and took her by force to his brother Thomas's house of Gertranky, where he imprisoned her because she would not consent to a marriage with him, under her oath to the King not to marry without his licence, and seized her jewels, horses, robes, and goods, to the value of £2000, to her grave loss and scandal, and in contempt of the King, who is greatly commoved thereat."[2] When first we hear of this ruffianly knight, in May 1296, he is among the Scottish prisoners at Buckingham Castle. At the time when Edward ordered him to stand his trial for the misuse of Countess Isabella, he was serving in the English garrison of Edinburgh Castle. Evidently he succeeded in escaping the wrath of the mighty Plantagenet, for the next that is heard of him is as a commander of the "insurgent Scots" who captured Stirling Castle at the end of 1299. He was specially excepted from the amnesty agreed upon between Edward's commissioners and Sir John Comyn in February 1304, but nothing seems to be known as to his ultimate fate.[3]

[1] *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. ii. pp. 29–30. *Cf.* J. Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. ii., No. 1108.

[2] Bain's *Calendar*, vol. ii., No. 1066.

[3] *Ibid.*, Nos. 1132, 1469, 1473, 1949: vol. iv., No. 1768.

On 17th March 1302, Edward I. ordered his Chancellor, John de Langton, to issue letters under his great seal, re-enfeoffing Countess Isabella in her English lands, "which she has agreed with Sir John de Hastings to get back with the King's leave";[1] but the Scottish territories of the Countess were not included in this bargain, and Sir John must have continued to hold Coull Castle for the English King. In July 1305, John, Earl of Athole, addressed a petition to King Edward, in which he points out that whereas he was authorised by the King and Council to draw revenues up to 1200 merks from the town of Aberdeen and the fermes of Aboyne, Coule, Mortleye, and Botharme, he has received from them only £540, which sum he has spent in repairing the Castles of Aberdeen and Aboyne, and garrisoning each with 20 men-at-arms and 40 sergeants-on-foot. The petitioner continues that he has now been ordered by the King to deliver the land of Mortleye to the Earl of Buchan, and the land of Coule to the Countess of Fife, and that Sir Aymar de Valence holds the land of Botharme; and therefore prays that the King would please to take some order regarding his sustenance under the said assignment. On the petition is endorsed the following decision: "The King's pleasure is that Sir Aymar de Valence hold the land of Butharm, and the Earl draw his fixed assignment from the Chamberlain of Scotland."[2]

John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, whom we thus discover in occupation of Coull in 1305, was Edward's warden and justiciary north of the Forth. In the year following he joined Bruce's insurrection, was one of the defenders of Kildrummy Castle, and, being captured at or shortly after its surrender, was hanged by Edward's order, his royal descent being tactfully recognised in the provision for him of a gallows 30 feet higher than usual.

Sir John de Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny and of the great estates of the Countess of Fife on both sides of the Border, was one of the claimants to the Scottish throne in 1291, a trusted servant and confidant of Edward I., and some time Seneschal of Aquitaine. That he was ever personally in residence at Coull Castle is doubtful. According to Barbour, he was Governor of Brodick Castle, Arran, at the time of Douglas's attempt on it early in 1307.[3] In July or August 1307 he was ordered by Aymar de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, Edward's viceroy in Scotland, to report for service with the garrison of Ayr, and on 30th September 1307 instructions are issued to him by Edward II. to proceed into Galloway in order to aid the viceroy, Sir John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond, in putting down Robert de Brus, who is

[1] Bain's *Calendar*, vol. ii., No. 1299. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 1682.
[3] Barbour's *Bruce*, ed. W. M. Mackenzie, p. 67.

"burning and plundering, and inciting and compelling the inhabitants to rebel."[1]

As to the fortunes of Coull Castle during these stormy years nothing is known. After the war it reverted to the Earls of Fife,[2] but later in the fourteenth century was held for a time by the Douglases. The barony of Neell and of Coule (*terris baronie de Neell et de Coule infra vicecomitatum de Abreden*) is mentioned in a charter granted by David II. on 12th February 1354 to William, Lord of Douglas, confirming to him all the lands that belonged to James, Lord of Douglas, his uncle, and Archibald of Douglas, his father. In this charter the lands of Coull and O'Neill are included among those having belonged to Sir Archibald Douglas, but when and how they came into his possession is not known.[3] It is probable that they may have been alienated temporarily owing to the defection of Duncan, Earl of Fife, who joined Edward Balliol and the English party after the battle of Dupplin (12th August 1332), and was captured at Perth. He took part in David II.'s invasion of England in 1346, was captured at Neville's Cross (17th October), sent to the Tower, and condemned to death by Edward III. (then in his lines before Calais) as a traitor from his allegiance previously sworn to Edward Balliol. Owing to his relationship to the English King—his wife, Mary de Monthermer, was a granddaughter of Edward I.—he was pardoned, returned to Scotland, and died between 1353 and 1356.[4] His daughter and heiress, Isabella, was the last of her family to hold Coull.

Among the Drum charters is a grant by James, Earl of Douglas and Mar, between 1377 and 1384, to Sir Thomas de Harkar, of the lands of Largeny (Learney), in the barony of Cowle in Mar. The manor of Cowle (*manerium de Cowle*) is mentioned as the place of the chief court of the barony.[5] On 22nd June 1389 the barony of Cowll and O'Neill, with the fortalice thereof, was resigned into the King's hands by Isabella, Countess of Fife,[6] and on 12th August in that year was bestowed by Robert II. on his son, afterwards the famous Duke of Albany.[7] On 18th February 1398, Albany executed a deed, confirmed by Robert III. on 5th March following, granting to his son, John Stewart, the barony of Coule and O'Neill. In these two deeds the various possessions and rights

[1] Bain's *Calendar*, vol. ii., No. 1961; vol. iii., No. 15.

[2] Charter of Robert I. to Duncan, Earl of Fyffe, of the barony of Oneill, in the sheriffdom of Aberdeen—W. Robertson, *Index to the Missing Charters*, p. 16.

[3] Sir William Fraser, *The Douglas Book*, vol. ii. p. 586, vol. iii. pp. 360-1.

[4] See W. Wood, *A Short Account of the Earls of Fife*, pp. 42-63.

[5] J. F. Leslie, *The Irvines of Drum and Collateral Branches*, pp. 9, 28. In 1446, James II. granted the lands of Largnye, in the barony of Neale in Coule, to Sir Alexander Erwyn of Drume, on the resignation of John de Haliburtoune of Saulyne—*ibid.*, p. 48.

[6] Sir John Skene, *De Verborum Significatione*, 1681, *sub verbo Arage*.

[7] *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. ii. pp. 30-1.

conveyed are minutely specified with all the precision beloved of the mediæval lawyer; but in neither is any mention made of Coull Castle. The *reddendo* in John Stewart's charter is one silver penny yearly at the capital place of the said barony. ("*Soluendo inde annuatim predictus Joannes filius noster et heredes sui quibus deficientibus ceteri sui fratres filij nostri et heredes sui antedicti unum denarium argenti apud capitalem locum dicte baronie in festo Pentecostes nomine albefirme tantum si petatur.*"[1]) John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, who thus obtained the barony, was one of the most distinguished soldiers of his time. Being sent with a Scottish army to aid King Charles VI. of France against the English, he was ultimately made Grand Constable of France, and fell on the stricken field of Verneuil (17th August 1424), where the Scots auxiliaries were slain off almost to a man. In 1437 the lands of Coull were vested in the Crown, and on 12th November in that year James I. granted a charter under the Great Seal to John Fyfe of Essintuly of the lands of Balbedy, in the barony of Coule, within the sheriffdom of Aberdeen.[2] On 10th October 1482, James III. granted a charter of "all and several our territories of the barony of O'Neil, to wit Coule, Kincragy, and le Corss" ("*omnes et singulas terras nostras baronie de O'Neil, videlicet terras de Coule, Kincragy, et le Corss*"), to his armour-bearer, Patrick Forbes, ancestor of the Forbeses of Corse, a family distinguished for their learning and piety in the seventeenth century.[3] On 11th January 1511, David Forbes of Corse received a charter from James IV. of the lands of Onele, Cors, Kincragy, and le Muretoun, uniting them into a barony, to be called the barony of O'Neil.[4] Previous to this grant the lands of Coull had been disjoined from the barony of O'Neill, and on 19th February 1492 were acquired by Alexander Irvine of Drum on the resignation of Patrick Forbes of Corse.[5] In the Exchequer Rolls from 1442 to 1529 there occurs a series of entries of the fermes of Coull uplifted on the King's behalf, and of its second tithes paid over to the Bishop of Aberdeen. Between 1442 and 1446 the fermes are drawn by Lord Forbes as sheriff-

[1] Charter in Dr Geo. Burnett's *Family of Burnett of Leys*, pp. 160-1.

[2] Crawfurd, *Lives of the Officers of State in Scotland*, 1726, p. 25, quoted in *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. ii. p. 30, footnote 1.

[3] *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, pp. 607-8; *Registrum Magni Sigilli* (1424-1513), No. 1518. Corse Castle, romantically situated about 4 miles north-east of Coull, is a fine ruin in the baronial style of the later sixteenth century. Over the door is the date 1581, with the initials W. F. (for William Forbes) and E. S. (for Elizabeth Strachan).

[4] *Reg. Mag. Sig.* (1424–1513), No. 3530.

[5] Charter of the lands of Cowle, in the barony of Onele, within the sheriffdom of Aberdeen, *Reg. Mag. Sig.* (1424–1513), No. 2085. A charter of confirmation was granted by James IV. on 4th February 1505—*ibid.*, No. 2923. In the latter document we are told that Alexander Irvine held the lands from the King: "*pro quibus vero tunc existebat sub summonitione ad instantiam regis; quam summonitionem rex annullavit pro singulari favore et pro bono servitio, necnon pro certis pecuniarum summis sibi persolutis.*"

depute of Aberdeenshire. On 25th November 1452 the lands of Coule are stated to be in the hands of the King from last Martinmas owing to the decease of the Countess of Buchan, who evidently had liferented them. In 1455 the fermes are remitted to Master Richard Forbes, Archdeacon of Ross, and formerly Chamberlain of Mar. In 1492 they are received by the Comptroller from Patrick Forbes (of Corse); and from 1498 onwards they are mentioned as in the hands of Alexander Irvine of Drum.[1]

By a charter dated at Edinburgh on 27th February 1554, the Queen-Regent grants to Alexander Irwyng, nephew and heir-apparent of Alexander "first of Drum," all the estates in possession of the Drum family, which Alexander senior had resigned. Amongst them are mentioned "the lands of Cowle with their castle and mill, in the sheriffdom of Aberdeen (*ac cum terris de Cowle cum earum castro et molendino, vic. Abirdene*)."[2]

Although the history of Coull Castle is so provokingly meagre, it is linked with a group of distinguished men, each of whom—Alan Durward, John de Hastings, John de Strathbogie, the Duke of Albany, and the Earl of Buchan—played an important part in his time, both in Scotland and beyond her borders; while its long connection, in later years, with the Scottish reigning house of Stewart gives the castle a special interest. From the collections of Sir James Balfour (1600-57) we learn that it was already in ruins during the first half of the seventeenth century. "Hard by the parishe churche of Coule," he writes, "ther is to be seine the ruines of ane ancient grate castle, called Coule Castle, the chiefe duelling of the ancient Lordes Durward, of quhom was descendit *Allanus Ostiarius, Comes Atholiæ et Justiciarius Scotiæ, regnante Alexandro IIndo Scottorum Rege, in anno 1230.*"[3] In 1725 it is mentioned as "an old ruinous castle, south from the church, called the Castle of Coul."[4] In the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen" (1732), we are told that Whitehouse, in the parish of Tullich, was "so called as being the only house in Cromar built with stone and mortar, since the ruin of the two old castles, Cowl and Migvie."[5]

The starting-point of the excavations now under review is to be found in a very interesting notice of the castle contained in the old *Statistical Account* of the parish, dated 1792, which is herewith subjoined.

"The most remarkable fragment of antiquity in this parish is the Castle of Coull; it is situated about one-fourth of an English mile south of the Manse. Not many years ago there was scarcely anything to be seen at all, but a number

[1] *Exchequer Rolls*, vols. v.-xv., ref. in Indices.
[2] *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, 1546–80, No. 897.
[3] *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 86, footnote 1.
[4] *Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. ii. p. 26.
[5] *Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 640.

of little green hills and the remainder of an old wall about 30 yards long and 10 or 12 feet thick; the ruins were buried in the ground, and might have continued hid from mortal view, had not a scarcity of manure induced people to dig about the old wall for rubbish; in doing this, they came upon the remains of four gates and five turrets of very extraordinary dimensions. These last, as nearly as can be guessed, for it is impossible to measure them exactly on account of their broken state, will be about 18 or 20 feet diameter; the walls in those places which seem most entire are 15 feet thick, built with lime and stone throughout; one of the gates, which is not so much demolished as the rest, is closed above with a Gothic arch of freestone; this gate is 9 feet wide, 12 feet high, and 15 feet thick. The whole work, as far as can now be traced, appears to have been a square measuring about 50 yards on each side. It is only a very small portion of it that is yet opened up; three sides of it, in a great measure, are still underground. Among the rubbish dug up were found several small pieces of silver coin with this inscription, '*Alexander Rex Scotorum.*'"[1]

Despite its very circumstantial appearance, this account is not without its difficulties. The "remainder of an old wall, about 30 yards long and 10 or 12 feet thick," described as above ground before the plunder of the site commenced, may have been either the north or the west curtain, though neither approaches the thickness indicated. Doubtless the four gates included entrances to some of the towers, or to the domestic buildings within the courtyard. The remark that the towers could not be measured exactly "on account of their broken state," implying that only parts of their circumference were extant when first discovered, has an important bearing on the problem of the ultimate fate of the castle, to be discussed hereafter. The language of the notice suggests that all the towers were about the same in diameter, 18 to 20 feet—a measurement which agrees well enough (if taken interiorly) with the gatehouse tower and the donjon, but not with the north-west tower, which is much smaller. Also none of the curtain walls are anything like 15 feet thick, except the east curtain, which is even thicker. The width given of the gate with the "Gothic"—*i.e.* pointed—arch agrees fairly well with the width (12 feet) of the trance as established in the recent excavations, for the actual portal would of course be contracted by the jambs. The usual width was sufficient to admit three men-at-arms abreast. On a more general view, the statements that "only a very small portion" of the castle was exposed, and that "three sides of it, in a great measure, are still underground," are not easy to reconcile with the assertion that five towers had been dug out. Indeed, the "howk" for lime must have been a truly enormous one if an excavation on such a scale actually took place. One wonders how much precisely of the building had been revealed by these sporadic diggings.

[1] *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 201. In the *New Statistical Account*, vol. xii. p. 959, the towers are described as hexagonal. Finally, in Alex. Smith's *New History of Aberdeenshire*, part i. p. 365, we read of "four hexagonal towers and five turrets."

After having thus been partially exposed, the ruins again became completely buried, and the 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (last edition, 1902, Aberdeenshire, sheet lxxxii. 5) gives a very accurate plan of the earthworks and surface appearances, entitled "Site of Coull Castle." In 1912 the estate was purchased by Mr A. Marshall Mackenzie, LL.D., R.S.A., F.S.A.Scot. Himself a distinguished architect, Dr Marshall Mackenzie was naturally interested in the architectural achievement of his predecessors at Coull; and he commenced excavations on the site with a view to discovering what still remained to our own time of this powerful and early fortress. Continued until interrupted by the war, his operations resulted in the discovery of the donjon, part of the adjoining east curtain, the south curtain and postern, and the inner wall of the inhabited range, which was exposed along its whole front towards the courtyard. At the opposite end of this wall a small part of the north curtain was revealed, and some indication of the north-west tower. So matters remained until 9th September 1922, when the Deeside Field Club visited Coull Castle. In his address on that occasion Dr Marshall Mackenzie expressed his desire to resume the work of excavation, and complete the recovery from oblivion of one of Scotland's oldest and greatest castles. I then suggested to him the possibility of carrying out the work with the aid of a party of Boy Scouts, like the excavation conducted by me at Kildrummy Castle in 1919.[1] The following section will present a general report of the results achieved both by Dr Marshall Mackenzie's original excavations, and by the continued researches under my direction during the past summer.

II. Account of the Excavations.

Two very different types of castles were in use in Scotland during the thirteenth century. One, the older type, was the *motte*, or earthen mound enclosed by a ditch at base and having on its flat summit wooden buildings within a "peel" or palisade. Often there was a large bailey, or outer court, attached to the mound, enclosed by a ditch and a stockaded bank (see Duffus Castle, fig. 2, No. 1). This was the kind of castle in use throughout Normandy and England during the twelfth century, and was introduced into Scotland by the intruding Anglo-Norman baronage in the reign of David I. (1124–53). To this more primitive style of castle belonged the other Durward strongholds at Lumphanan and Strachan. The second type, introduced about the beginning of the thirteenth century, was constructed in stone and lime, and in Scotland, as elsewhere in Western Europe at this period, took

[1] See *Proceedings*, vol. liv. pp. 134–45.

the form of a bailey or courtyard, enclosed with strong curtain-walls defended by round or square flanking towers. These stone castles of the thirteenth century in their turn are capable of classification into two categories, an older and a newer type. The older type is characterised, in its fully developed form, by a single defensive envelope, and by the presence of a donjon or keep, which is simply one of the flanking

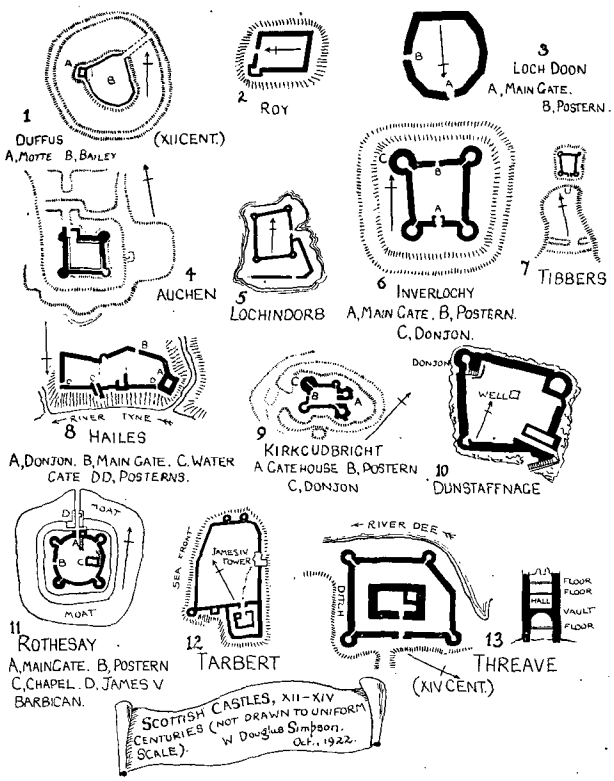


Fig. 2. Types of Early Scottish Castles.

towers upon the curtain, larger and stronger than the others, furnished usually with its own water-supply, and capable of isolation from the rest of the castle, so that it formed a last redoubt or *place d'armes*, a citadel wherein resistance could be maintained even after the curtains had been mined, breached, or scaled. This type of castle was in use throughout Scotland during the whole of the thirteenth century. The simplest examples, such as Mingary and Loch Doon (fig. 2, No. 3), consist of a mere quadrangular or polygonal wall, undefended by towers; but

others, such as Dunstaffnage (fig. 2, No. 10), Kirkcudbright (fig. 2, No. 9), Inverlochy (fig. 2, No. 6), Kildrummy, and Bothwell, exhibit far higher development. These castles have powerful flanking towers, a donjon, and a strongly defended gatehouse—more approaching the grandeur and elaboration of their contemporaries in England and France. About the end of the century, during the period of the English occupation, a new type of stone castle was introduced into Scotland. It is derived from the great concentric or "Edwardian" fortresses of which such splendid examples still exist in Wales—a province that, conquered just at the period when mediæval military engineering reached its climax, was secured by some of the grandest castles to be seen anywhere in Europe. In the Edwardian type of castle, the characteristic features are the arrangement of concentric envelopes or lines of defence, and the absence of a donjon. In place of the donjon there is what may be termed a "keep-gatehouse," which contains the fortified trance beneath and state apartments above, forming both a gatehouse and a keep or citadel to the whole castle. A number of the great Welsh concentric castles are illustrated in fig. 3. Beaumaris and Rhuddlan exhibit this arrangement in its ideal state, but in the others it has been modified to suit the ground, although in all the concentric principle has been maintained—*i.e.* the inner ward can be reached only through the outer. As one would expect, the Scottish concentric castles are much feebler, alike in design and execution, than their great English counterparts. An excellent example is Tibbers (fig. 2, No. 7), which is known to have been constructed in 1298 by a Scottish knight, Sir Richard Siward, in the pay of Edward I.[1] It is therefore a valuable proof of the English derivation of these keepless and concentric castles in Scotland. The inner ward, with its flanking towers, gatehouse, and lack of a donjon, is well developed. The outer ward seems to have been defended only by a bank and ditch; and, though it does not enclose the inner ward, the latter is elsewhere surrounded by marshland, and can be entered only through the outer ward, so that the castle is truly concentric in its conception. The Castles of Buittle and Auchen (fig. 2, No. 4) are examples of fully formed concentric fortresses, but on both the outer envelope is of earthwork only. The southern castle at Caerlaverock appears to have been of the same type. At Lochindorb (fig. 2, No. 5) the outer envelope is a stone curtain, concentric so far as the crannog-site allows. After the War of Independence a complete change came over Scottish military architecture. Under straitened circumstances the baronage abandoned the courtyard type of castle, and began to

[1] See *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland; Report on Dumfriesshire*, No. 157.

build strongholds on the plan of a square tower-house with an appended barmekin, or fortified enclosure, usually on a reduced scale (see Threave Castle, fig. 2, No. 13). It is from this period onwards that Scotland, thrown back on her own resources by the breach with England, began to develop a separate national style in castle-building. Hitherto her military architecture follows, though at a distance, the development

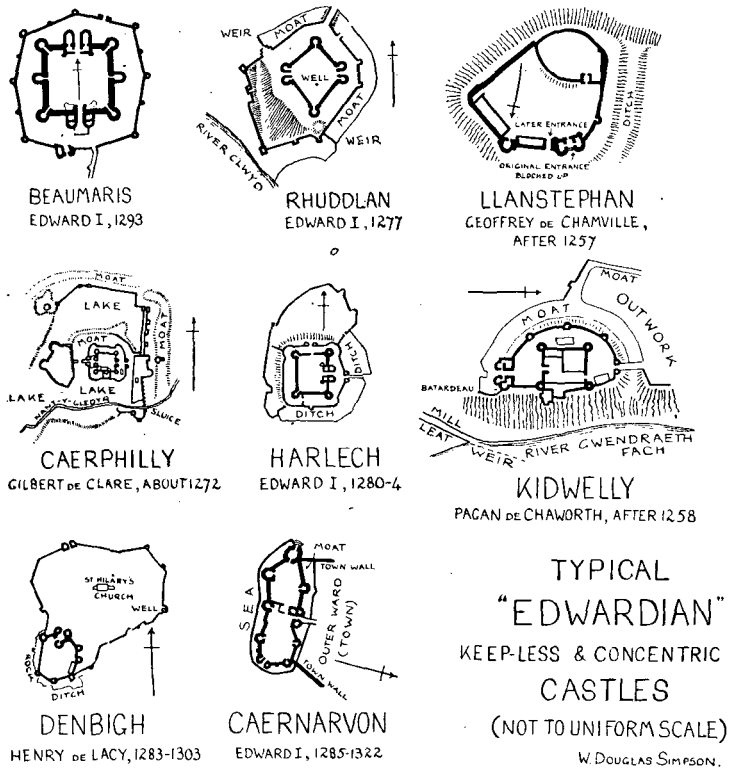


Fig. 3. Typical Edwardian Castles.

of the English castle through the three stages indicated—(1) the *motte* castle of earth and timber; (2) the stone castle with a single envelope and a donjon; (3) the keepless and concentric castle of the Edwardian age.

General Description.—Erected comparatively early in the thirteenth century, the Castle of Coull belongs to the older type of stone fortress characterised by a single envelope and the presence of a donjon. Of this type it has been one of the largest and most fully developed

instances in Scotland. It consists (see plan, fig. 4) of a spacious irregular courtyard, apparently pentagonal in outline, enclosed by strong curtain-walls with round flanking towers, having a fortified entrance on the east side,[1] and the domestic range, or inhabited part of the castle, along the opposite or west curtain, which was the safest position, both because most remote from the gate, and also because the curtain here overhangs

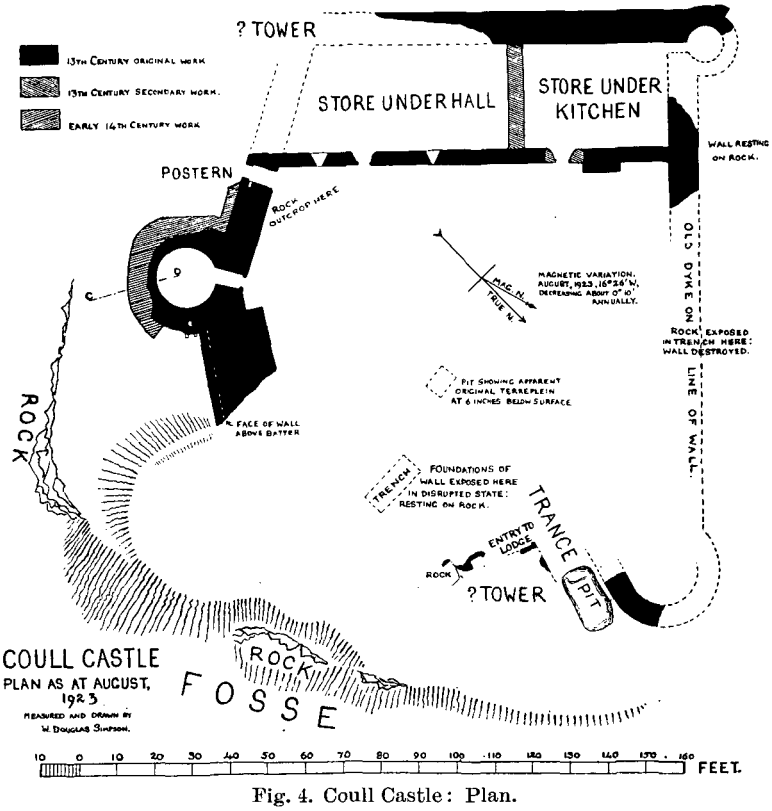


Fig. 4. Coull Castle: Plan.

the steep bank of the Tarland Burn. This west curtain is 8 feet 3 inches thick, and has been about 100 feet in length. At the north-west corner, and doubtless also at the south-west corner, it was flanked by a round

[1] For convenience of reference I have throughout assumed that the castle is set to the cardinal points. Actually (as will be seen from the plans) the gatehouse fronts almost north, the "north" curtain faces north-west, and the "west" curtain looks to the south-west. The magnetic variation at Coull Castle in August 1923, when the survey was made, has been extracted for me by the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, and was 16° 26′ W., decreasing about 0° 10′ annually. It should be noted that disturbances are somewhat greater in the Highlands than elsewhere. At Ballater the observed variation is 0° 30′ less than the catalogued variation.

angle-tower. The north-west tower, of which somewhat under one-half is preserved, has been about 9 feet 10 inches in internal diameter, within walls 3 feet 8 inches thick. Owing to the presence of the Tarland Burn on the west side, its salient is nearly all towards the north, upon which front it has been about two-fifths engaged with the curtain. From this tower the north curtain, which is 7 feet 8½ inches thick, has run at right angles, and apparently in a straight line, for a distance of some 122 feet to the gatehouse at the north-east angle. Only a very small portion of this curtain, towards its west end, is extant. The gatehouse is now in a very fragmentary condition, but appears to have consisted of two strong flanking towers with a deeply recessed trance, about 12 feet wide, between them, and in front of the portal a large pit sunk in the solid rock. Only a length of some 18 feet of the inner wall of the north tower remains, showing how its circular outline had passed back into a straight face along one side of the trance. In its circled portion this tower had been 17 feet 6 inches in diameter internally, and the wall at the base is 6 feet 4 inches thick. The pit measures 18 feet long, 8 feet 6 inches broad at half its length, and 5 feet deep below the rock surface. From the gatehouse the east curtain has returned, in a more or less curved outline, along the line of, but at some distance back from, the scarp of the ditch, until it meets the great tower or donjon at the south angle of the castle. This curtain is almost entirely destroyed, save for a length of some 27 feet, terminating at the donjon. In this part the wall, for reasons suggested hereafter, reaches the enormous thickness of 18 feet. The donjon has been reconstructed, but in its original state it had been a powerful tower, measuring about 15 feet in internal diameter, within walls 7 feet in basal thickness. It caps a low angle in the curtain-wall, which beyond it returns in a westerly direction to meet the west curtain, with which it has made an obtuse angle, doubtless provided with a tower. Beyond the keep the curtain-wall, as originally built, was 8 feet 3 inches thick, and is pierced by a postern gate. The inhabited part of the castle, along the west curtain, is 27 feet 4 inches in internal breadth, and has been arranged in the usual fashion of a mediæval house—a basement containing storage beneath the great hall on the first floor, with the kitchen at the lower or north end of the hall, and the lord's private apartment ("solar," "great chamber," or "chalmer of des") at the upper end, doubtless in the missing south-west tower. The total frontage of the inhabited range, within the courtyard, measures about 104 feet.

The levels of the castle are somewhat peculiar. The highest part of its area is occupied by the east curtain, from which the ground slopes very slightly towards the ditch on the exterior side, and rather more

steeply on the inner or courtyard side. Reckoning along the section A B (figs. 20, 11), a pit sunk in the courtyard, where shown on plan, fig. 4, revealed what seemed to be undisturbed, stratified fluvio-glacial sand at 6 inches below the sward. If this is so, the ancient surface-level thus indicated is about 8 feet below the rock foundation of the east curtain,[1] as exposed in the trench (shown on plan) cut athwart it a little south of the line of section. On the other side of the courtyard, the foundations of the inner wall of the inhabited range are 7 feet below the unexcavated surface, or about 12 feet below the base of the east curtain. These measurements indicate that the courtyard must have had a fairly steep slope towards the west, or possibly a terrace. The west curtain, and the south curtain west of the donjon, are about level; but the east curtain ascends very steeply from the donjon to the highest point, just where it is breached, from which point it has descended more gently towards the gatehouse. On the other side of the gatehouse the north curtain ascends gradually to a point somewhat short of half its length, after which it descends fairly sharply towards the north-west tower. The castle seems to be very largely founded on bed-rock. An area of ice-worn surface crops out just inside the postern, the jambs of which rest on rock; rock was exposed in various trenches cut to find the foundations of the east and north curtains; the floors of the north-west tower and of the donjon consist of rock; and the base of the gatehouse tower rests directly upon the rock in which the pit is excavated.

The Donjon.—Its general character and dispositions having thus been briefly indicated, I may now proceed to describe the castle in detail. And first of the "great tower" or donjon, which is the most imposing fragment of the castle that remains (fig. 5). The internal area of this tower is about 15 feet in diameter, and the walls as originally built had been about 7 feet in basal thickness, battering with a very steep rake to a vertical height of about 5 feet. The tower is entered by a doorway and passage in the gorge wall. The door, which is at the outer end of the

[1] On this matter Mr Charles B. Bisset has kindly furnished me with the following geological report:—

"With regard to the sand-pit in the courtyard, I have ascertained the following facts:—

(1) It does not contain lime.
(2) It contains sharply angular chips and fragments of rock.
(3) It is at a little below the level of the top of the pit at the gatehouse.
(4) It is stratified and sorted.

"Perhaps the most important fact is the presence of these angular rock-fragments. This points strongly to the probability that the stratified sand was formed after some demolition had taken place and was not there before the castle was built. In view of this, I suggest that you should qualify any statement you may make about it till you get it dug out thoroughly."

The matter is thus *sub judice*, but in the meantime it may be observed that if the sand really was formed subsequently to the demolition of the castle, it is hard to understand how it could contain no lime.

passage and has closed against the courtyard, is about 3 feet in breadth, and has well-wrought jambs in freestone with a check and a plain external chamfer. A bolt hole about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter still remains on the west side, with the groove, 10 inches long, worn by the bolt plying against the adjoining cheek of wall. Between two of the rybat stones beside it is a rusted iron bat. The total length of the passage, from the exterior of the door to where it opens into the tower, is 7 feet 8 inches. At present the tower stands about 17 feet 6 inches above the bed-rock upon which it is founded, exposed in a pit sunk during the recent excavations. No trace of a floor scarcement, mortise-holes,

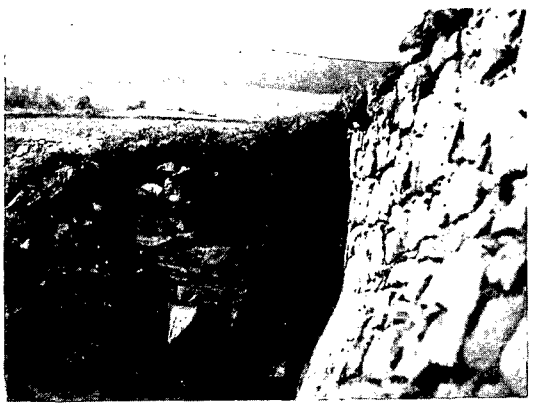
[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 5. Coull Castle : Donjon, looking east.

or vaulting exists in the interior of the tower; nor are there any visible means of communication with the upper storeys.

In the east re-entrant of the tower is a garderobe flue (fig. 6), consisting of a roughly built projecting structure resting on two massive unwrought stones which serve as corbels. The vent between the corbels is about 4 feet 6 inches above the foundation of the tower, the exterior height of which is about 11 feet. When cleared out from above the flue was found to be carefully built, measuring 1 foot 4 inches by $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with a pronounced outward rake at its base. The position of this garderobe in connection with a mural tower is quite characteristic, and is paralleled at Lochindorb, Dunstaffnage, Dirleton, Bothwell (see plan of gatehouse, fig. 14), and Kildrummy. It is explained by the fact that the towers were generally used as permanent quarters for the garrison. At Coull there appears to have been no provision for cleaning the garderobe, and the soil was probably removed from the outside, possibly with the assistance of

water poured down from above. One of the garderobes at Bothwell has a contrivance for flushing it by means of water let in from the inner moat.



[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 6. Coull Castle : East Curtain and Garderobe in Donjon.

The donjon bears evidence of having suffered extensive damage and partial reconstruction at an early date. As originally built, the very steeply battered plinth of its base—which rises straight from the founda-

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 7. Coull Castle: Postern Gate and South Curtain, showing added "apron."

tions without intervening vertical courses—is carried westward along the adjoining south curtain. Against this plinth there has later been built a new batter (fig. 7), of a much gentler rake, which is continued all round the base of the donjon (fig. 5) to a point on the east face, where it returns at right angles into the older wall (fig. 8). In the west re-entrant of the tower (fig. 9) the upper courses of the original batter are seen emerging

above from behind the addition. At a distance of about 3 feet out from the re-entrant the original face of the tower stops with a broken edge;

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 8. Coull Castle: Return of added "apron" into wall of Donjon.

and the added batter is carried, across the breach, in behind the original outline of the tower—the outer face of which, for a considerable portion of its circumference, had been previously removed to such an extent that

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 9. Coull Castle: South Curtain and Donjon, showing added "apron."

the remnant of the vertical wall above the batter is now, in most places, only 2 or 3 feet thick (see plan, fig. 4). The exposed ragged hearting of the original wall, reduced to this thickness, still stands to a height of 2 or 3 feet above the new batter, which has been built directly up against it. This huge batter or "apron," with its almost beehive profile (fig. 5)

and very irregular outline on plan, is a most extraordinary structure, uncouth and hurried alike in design and execution. The masonry of the addition differs markedly from that of the more ancient walls against which it is built (figs. 7, 9). The facing of the earlier work may be described as roughly coursed rubble of "heathen" boulders with pinnings inserted very irregularly, behind which the heart of the wall is composed of smaller stones and chips grouted in a copious bath of mortar. In the added masonry the facing is made up of uncoursed boulders set very closely together and with far less frequent use of pinnings. In the interior of the tower the two kinds of masonry are again visible in sharp contrast (fig. 10), the older or coursed work being *above* the uncoursed work, which lines the base of the tower to a height varying from 2 to 6 feet above the rock-level exposed in the pit dug in the centre. From this it is evident that, after the "apron" had been built round the tower outside, the lowest courses of the damaged wall had been removed on the interior and replaced by under-pinning masonry similar to that employed in the outward addition.

[Photo W. Norrie.

Fig. 10. Coull Castle: Interior of Donjon, looking east, showing two styles of Masonry.

The general conclusion to be drawn from a careful examination of this tower is that it has been greatly injured, evidently by a deliberate attempt to breach or mine the wall; the whole exterior face of which has been removed, as shown on plan (fig. 4), for the greater part of its circumference, leaving only the inner 2 or 3 feet of the wall intact. To repair this destruction the enormous "apron" was built all round the injured portion of the tower; and the lower courses of the interior wall, which must have been disturbed by the mining operations, were taken out and replaced with new work. The resulting condition of the tower is illustrated by the section in fig. 11. As already stated, the fragment of damaged wall rising above the new "apron" is only about 2 or 3 feet thick; and it seems doubtful if this could ever have been carried up to any great height, or have supported floors and a roof. Whether any effort was made to carry the wall round again at its original thickness above the added batter is uncertain; but the "apron" seems to be somewhat levelled up all round as if to provide a bench for such a purpose.

The whole reconstruction is extremely interesting, and not very clear in some of its aspects; but the explanation offered above seems to be the only one that will satisfy all the circumstances. At Dirleton Castle, which was destroyed during the War of Independence, an angle-tower was pulled down to the top of its battered plinth; and, when in later years the castle was restored, the battered base was simply coped over in very rough fashion, and an angle of wall built on top.

In its original condition this donjon must have been a lofty tower, as it rises from a low level and would require to command the higher

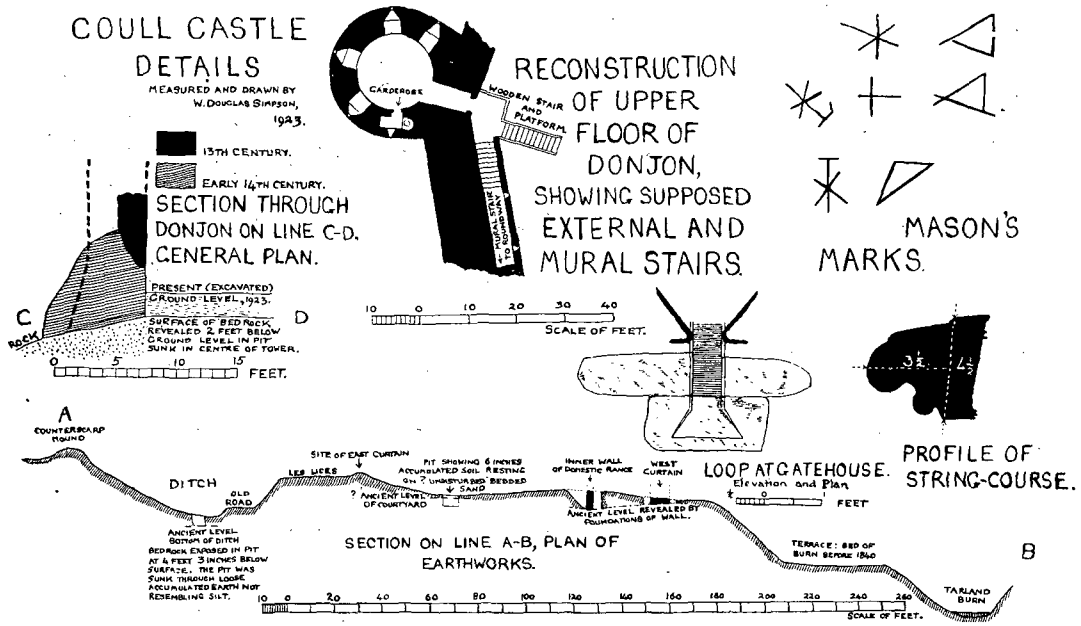


Fig. 11. Coull Castle: Details.

ground north-eastward, and the curtain-wall thereon. No doubt the wall-heads would be furnished with the hoardings or timber galleries which were the ordinary means of parapet defence in the thirteenth century. Stone-built machicolated roundways, such as are found in Scottish castles of the fifteenth century, like Craigmillar and Borthwick, were hardly known, even in France, before the fourteenth century. The enormous machicolations of the donjon at Château Gaillard, Richard Cœur-de-Lion's "daughter of a single year" (1196), were the solitary anticipation of a military genius,[1] almost unimitated for a full century

[1] See Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, vol. v. pp. 69–71. "*Le premier, Richard remplaça les hourds de bois des crénelages par des*

thereafter. At Threave Castle, built soon after 1369 by Archibald the Grim, the putlog-holes and other provision for a hoarding to man the wall-head may still be seen almost entire. And in the great castle of Bothwell we may study both kinds of parapet defence, the earlier and the later, within the same building; for the donjon, or Valence Tower, still retains the stone corbels which supported its timber gallery, while the Douglas Tower, reconstructed by Grim Archibald soon after 1388, carries a very beautiful machicolated parapet in stone.

The Curtains and Angle-Towers.—On the east side of the donjon the curtain-wall, 11 feet high where it meets the tower, is preserved for a length of some 26 feet 7 inches, at which point it is abruptly broken off right down to the foundations. The wall (to the right in fig. 6), which climbs the slope steeply, has a very massive batter, 6 feet in vertical height, rising straight from the foundations. The masonry is similar to the older work in the tower and the south curtain, and is coursed up the slope of the wall—a somewhat unusual practice[1] and thoroughly bad construction, though in this case the risk of slipping is minimised partly by the donjon, acting as a giant buttress at the lower end of the curtain, and partly by the enormous spreading solidity of the wall itself, which here reaches a basal thickness of 18 feet 2 inches. An angled recess is formed on the interior of this curtain just where it meets the gorge wall of the donjon. Perhaps the recess had accommodated a wooden stair for giving access to the allure-walk and to the upper floors of the donjon. There is an arrangement of this kind at Dunstaffnage Castle. It is possible that this stair, ascending from the courtyard at right angles to the curtain, may have debouched on a wooden platform, giving access on the one side to the first floor of the donjon, and on the other side to stone steps conducting along the inner side of the east curtain up to the roundway, in the manner suggested on the reconstructed plan (fig. 11).[2] Such an arrangement, if it existed, would supply an additional reason for the great thickness of this curtain. A device of this sort seems necessary in view of the absence of any visible communication with the upper floors of the donjon.

mâchicoulis de pierre, conçus de manière a enfiler entièrement le pied de la fortification du côté attaquable. . . . Cet ouvrage, à notre avis, dévoile, chez le roi Richard, un génie militaire vraiment remarquable, une étude approfondie des moyens d'attaque employés de son temps, un esprit pratique fort éloigné de la fougue inconsidérée que les historiens modernes prêtent à ce prince." *Cf.* vol. iii. pp. 82–3. It is of course questionable how far the credit should not rather be awarded to Cœur-de-Lion's engineer. We can scarcely suppose that the King himself actually designed the castle, though he may have inspired its details.

[1] Mediæval walls were occasionally built in this way, for example the west curtain of Dover Castle, south of Fulbert de Douvres' Tower. This curtain, which is faced with large flints, is assigned to the thirteenth century. See *Report of the Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Year ending* 31*st March* 1913, p. 11.

[2] The wooden part of this supposed stair is not so likely to have ascended along the inside of the south curtain, since there are no putlog-holes in the wall here.

Where the east curtain is broken away, the space which intervenes between this front of the castle and the enclosing ditch is expanded into a roughly semicircular area, about 45 feet in diameter, along a portion of which, on the south side, is a small mound (see plan, fig. 4). Before the recent excavations, Dr Marshall Mackenzie and I had formed the opinion that this semicircular area covered the foundations of a large round tower, and that the mound on its south side concealed the remains of the tower wall. On excavation, however, the base of the east curtain was shown to run right across the mound on to the semicircular area, without any trace of a return. Where cut through in this section the mound was ascertained to consist merely of rubbish, and a section cut at a different point told the same story. Also trenches run across the area itself showed no traces of an occupation level. Under the meagre turf a thin layer of carbonised vegetation was found directly to overlie rotten rock, below which the bed-rock was uncovered at less than 1 foot beneath the surface. It is evident, therefore, that this semicircular area is simply an expansion of *les lices*—the terrace or *glacis* which intervenes between the castle and its ditch along the whole of this front. From where it is broken off the curtain-wall had run in a curved outline, more or less parallel to the ditch, towards the gatehouse. It has been completely destroyed, but masses of disrupted rubble-work, scattered over a bed-rock surface, were found in three trenches cut across the irregular stony mound that still marks its course.

On the other side of the donjon the south curtain, reinforced by the later "apron," runs westward for about 16 feet, at which point it is pierced by a postern gate (fig. 7). Here the "apron" terminates in a diagonal splayed stop. The postern is 3 feet 9 inches wide exteriorly, and has carefully wrought freestone jambs without an external splay. At 1 foot 11½ inches inward it is checked for a door, and on the east jamb behind the rebate is the bar hole, 1 foot 8 inches deep and 7 inches square, at a height of about 4 feet above the sole of the door. Besides providing access to the outworks on this front, the postern would afford a useful means of effecting a sally against besiegers engaged in mining the donjon. Postern gateways similarly situated with reference to the donjon may be seen at Bothwell and Dirleton Castles. The postern had been closed above with a plain round arch, three voussoirs of which were found lying beside it.

Immediately beyond the postern the inner or courtyard wall of the domestic range engages with the south curtain; and in line with the west face of this wall the curtain has been clean breached through, right to the foundation. No traces of it were recovered beyond this point, and all attempts to find the tower which must have capped the south-west angle of the castle proved abortive, though a large excavation was

made in the hope of discovering it. But dressed stones, some wrought to the curve, and jamb-stones of a door, afforded evidence of the former existence of a tower in this position.

The exterior face of the west curtain was discovered, in a more or less perfect condition, for a length of 83 feet. At its northern end it still remains to a height of about 2 feet 6 inches, and exhibits a batter; but for the greater part of its course only the foundations, in a very disturbed state, are preserved. The inner face of the wall was revealed in its northern portion, showing that this curtain had been 8 feet 3 inches thick. At the north-west corner of the castle was an angle-tower with northward salient, measuring 9 feet 10 inches in internal diameter, within walls 3 feet 8 inches thick. Only the western half of this tower remains (fig. 12), the rest of the structure having been completely destroyed right down to the foundations. The batter along the west curtain is carried round the face of the tower, upon a roughly built projecting base-course, for a length of some 7 feet, beyond which the tower is built perpendicular. A wrought elbow returns the batter into the perpendicular wall, and is carried on a dwarf buttress of somewhat irregular shape, but measuring about 2 feet 10 inches in projection, 3 feet 8 inches in breadth, and 2 feet 6 inches high (see plan, fig. 4). The tower is built upon a very irregular rock-bottom, and where best preserved is about 7 feet high. The inner face of the west curtain is prolonged to form one cheek of a door, without rebate, leading into the tower, and there is a rock-cut step down into its interior.

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 12. Coull Castle: Interior View, North-west Tower.

Only a small portion of the north curtain was recovered, at the point where it engages with the inner wall of the domestic range. An exterior length of about 15 feet, battered, about 3 feet 3 inches in height, and resting upon rock, was exposed, and inner lengths of 13 feet and 12 feet 6 inches to the west and east of the house-wall respectively. This curtain has been 7 feet 8½ inches thick. A modern dry-built dyke now runs along the top of the curtain, extending across the north-west tower and down the slope towards the Tarland Burn. Between the point where the curtain was lost and the north-west tower,

the dyke was removed and the whole area cleared out right down to bed-rock, without any trace of the curtain being found. It is thus evident that the curtain here, with the greater part of the tower adjoining, has been deliberately destroyed down to the very foundations. The same conclusion was to be drawn from the state of matters in the other direction. Here the dyke climbs a fairly steep slope, beyond which it descends again to the gatehouse. It was hoped that the high level might conceal a considerable fragment of the curtain, but on the ground being opened up the dyke was found to rest directly upon bed-rock, exposed immediately below the turf. It seems probable, therefore, that the fragment now exposed represents all that remains of the north curtain.

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 13. Coull Castle: Gatehouse Tower, looking north-west.

The Gatehouse.—The gatehouse at the north-east angle has been terribly destroyed, but enough survives to indicate that it must have been a fully developed and strongly fortified structure.

A portion of the wall of the north flanking tower was exposed (fig. 13), measuring 17 feet 10 inches in length exteriorly, and 5 feet 9 inches in exterior height. This wall is built with a battered base extending 5 feet 4 inches vertically high, and the basal thickness of the wall is 6 feet 4 inches. Interiorly the wall stands 5 feet 1½ inch in greatest height above the rock foundation upon which the tower rests. The tower has been about 17 feet 6 inches in internal diameter, and its wall passed back into the straight to form the north side of a long trance or fortified entry. Across the trance a small length of the opposite wall was fortunately recovered (where shown on plan, fig. 4), indicating that the passage had been 12 feet 2 inches wide. All attempts to find the companion flanking tower failed, although the ground was thoroughly trenched. Rock *in situ* was everywhere found immediately under the turf, and it seems certain that this tower has wholly perished. In rear of the trance, on the south side, a small length of wall foundation was uncovered at right angles, and at its junction with the trance wall four splayed and checked jamb-stones were taken out, overthrown but nearly in position. Evidently this lateral wall and the door-stones

are the remains of a porter's lodge opening off the entrance passage. At about 13 feet southward from this, again, were disinterred other remnants of walling (see plan, fig. 4), comprising a built recess about 3 feet 3 inches broad and 2 feet 7 inches deep, and a base-course of boulders in the form of a segmental, buttress-like structure, abutting upon a rock-face, steeply sloped, upon the top of which again were indications of a square return. The relationships of these very fragmentary remains are obscure, but doubtless they represent walls in the rear-building of the gatehouse.

In front of the entry was found a large pit, roughly hewn in the solid granite. Irregularly oval in shape, it measures 18 feet in length, 8 feet 6 inches broad at half the length, and 5 feet deep below the rock flooring of the trance, which was found at a depth of 2 feet below the turf. The sides of the pit, which are very rough and irregular, descend perpendicular for three-quarters of its depth and then run out into a level floor. In the process of clearing out this pit were revealed abundant evidences of a catastrophe. The upper part of the pit was filled with great stones representing *débris* of collapsed buildings, including many dressed fragments in freestone, and the great jamb-stones of a large gate wrought very plainly in freestone without any external splay. A great deal of charcoal was everywhere found, and as the deeper levels of the pit were penetrated larger masses of burnt wood, some as much as 3 or 4 inches in length, were dug out, of which many were evidently portions of dressed woodwork. Along with these were found quantities of large iron nails, of which no less than 153 were found in and about the pit, 31 from within its depths. Many of these nails were twisted as if with the action of heat. At the base of the pit a continuous layer of charcoal was found, varying from 6 inches to 1 foot in depth, and including, besides fragments of comminuted woodwork, charred matter of a quite different type, consisting of brushwood and small twigs. The charred woodwork and nails suggest that the bridge spanning the pit had been burned, and the incinerated brushwood was doubtless the remains of fascines used to ignite it. The jamb-stones and other dressed fragments recovered from the pit were found intermingled with, and stained black by, the charcoal, showing that the gatehouse buildings had collapsed or been thrown into the burning *débris*. Lastly, in and about the pit were found masses of slaggy substance and fused rock material, including in themselves chips of stone, and in one case showing the impression of a charred log. A bleb of melted iron about 1 inch broad was fused into one of the basal stones of the gate-tower, in such a position that it was at first mistaken for a wasted trunnion of the bridge.

This pit in front of the entrance at Coull Castle is a very interesting feature. At Bothwell Castle, another thirteenth-century stronghold, there is a house of entry (fig. 14), very like what the one at Coull must have been. The portal is deeply recessed between two flanking towers, whose opposite faces pass back into the straight walls of a long trance, carried through between guardrooms or porter's lodges in rear of the towers, while in front of the portal is a carefully constructed ashlar-lined pit. At Morton Castle, a mid-fifteenth-century building, a gatehouse of similar design occurs (fig. 14), in which the special use of

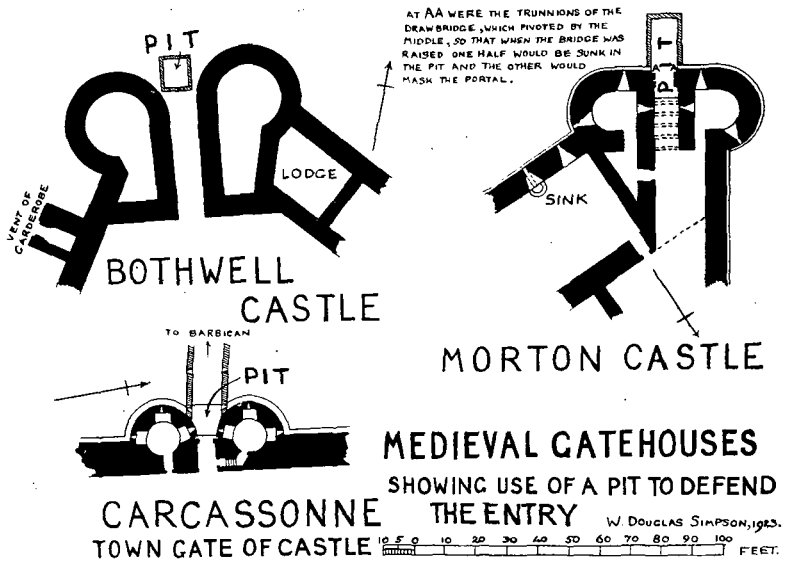


Fig. 14. Mediæval Gatehouses with Pits.

the pit is more clearly apparent. Two D-shaped towers set back to back, and therefore having a lateral but no frontal salient, enclose between their closed gorges a ribbed trance defended by a portcullis and folding gates. Underneath the sill of the gateway is a long ashlar-built pit, extending back into the trance. This pit had been spanned by a bridge swung on trunnions at the threshold of the door, and so managed that when raised one portion of the bridge would be sunk in the pit, while the other projected upwards in front of the gate, to which it thus formed an additional defence. Just within this is a gate which opened outwards, and therefore could only be used when the drawbridge was down. Behind this, again, were the portcullis and an inner gate. The gatehouse of the inner ward at

the Château d'Arques has a pit of this sort, and a similar mode of defending the entry was in use at the citadel of Carcassonne (fig. 14). It is hardly necessary to say that in these and other French castles the defences of the gatehouse were designed and executed with an elaboration to which we can offer no parallel in Scotland; but none the less the principles which governed the mediæval engineer were everywhere the same.[1]

The Domestic Range.—There remains to be described the inhabited part of the castle. This has formed an oblong block, 27 feet 4 inches in interior

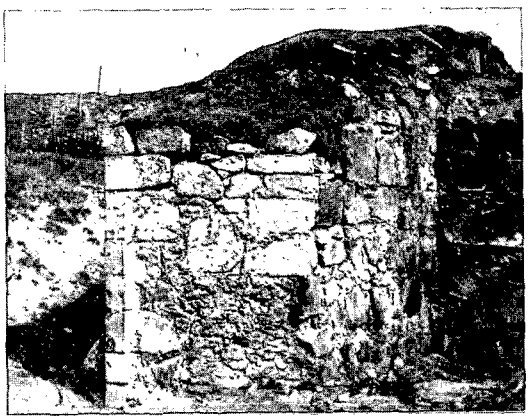
[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 15. Coull Castle: Courtyard Wall of Domestic Range, looking north-west. (Photo taken before this summer's excavations had opened up the interior of the range and disclosed the partition wall.)

breadth, extending along the whole length of the west curtain. The inner wall, towards the courtyard, is 103 feet 9 inches in length and 3 feet 9 inches thick, and in places still remains to a height of 7 or 8 feet (fig. 15). At the eastern end of the house, on the first floor, was the kitchen, of which the fireplace buttress, carried down to the ground, remains. South of the kitchen was the hall, and below all were cellars or storage rooms, unvaulted. Between hall and kitchen the partition wall (fig. 16) still remains to a height of about 7 feet, and is 4 feet thick. The kitchen had

[1] Mr G. Patrick H. Watson, F.S.A.Scot., Architect to the Scottish Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, informs me that there is a gatehouse pit at the Edwardian Castle of Buittle, in the Stewartry. This pit is not clearly indicated in the Commission Report (Galloway, vol. ii., No. 74).

been 38 feet 8 inches in length. Its chimney buttress measures 9 feet 10 inches in length, with a projection of 2 feet 5 inches, and has quoins carefully wrought in freestone. Adjoining it to the south is a door, 3 feet 8½ inches wide, also carefully fashioned in the same material. In each jamb, just behind the check, two small holes are sunk. The centre pair of holes correspond in each jamb, but the second hole on the north side is below and the second hole on the south side above. This door is evidently an insertion; and the reason for the alteration appears from an inspection of the partition, which does not bond with the courtyard wall and is clearly an afterthought, the insertion of which rendered necessary the provision of a separate entrance into the northern part thus shut off. But from the close similarity of masonry between the partition and the courtyard wall, and the complete identity of treatment, alike in dimensions and tooling, between the freestone dressings of the slapped door and those found elsewhere in the castle, together with the presence of identical mason's marks, it would appear that the alteration was made very soon after the erection of the castle, if not even when its building was still in progress. Indeed the plan of the domestic range would postulate such a partition from the outset. Within the domestic range the inner face of the north curtain has been refaced at some period in small stones, the toothings of the ancient face still remaining at the east end.



[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 16. Coull Castle: Doorway and Partition Wall in Domestic Range.

In the other part of the house, south of the dividing wall, is a door with a narrow window on either side. The northern window (see fig. 15) is still partly preserved, and has a daylight width of 1 foot 2 inches, with a wide inward bay and a narrow external chamfer. The sill of this window is socketed for a thin central vertical bar or slat, the socket measuring about 1¼ inch by ⅜ inch. The other window is greatly ruined, but has been somewhat wider, and is socketed both for a vertical and a transverse bar, similar in section to that in the first window. The socket for the vertical bar still exhibits a trace of rusty iron. Neither window has been glazed or shuttered. The door between them is 3 feet 10½ inches

wide, with splayed and checked jambs carefully wrought in freestone. The ceiling of these cellarage apartments, being the floor of the hall and kitchen in the second storey, was of wood, resting on a rough corbel-course of projecting stones of which a small length remains, at a height of 6 feet above the threshold stones of the doors, just south of the partition wall. This corbel-course has extended uninterruptedly across the partition, and is exposed by the falling away of the latter—another proof that the partition has been an insertion. The hall had been about 60 feet in greatest length, along the east face. Its "screens," or lower end, would be to the north, adjoining the kitchen, with the dais at the opposite end, in close communication with the solar, or lord's private rooms, which, as suggested already, would no doubt occupy the missing south-western tower. It is not clear how access was gained to the hall and kitchen, but perhaps wooden stairs were provided for the purpose.

Masonry and Detail.—In the masonry of this castle there is to be marked a curious and striking contrast between the rudeness of the rubble walling and the very great care and refinement everywhere bestowed upon the dressed work. The masonry of the curtain-walls and towers, and of the early addition in connection with the donjon, has already been described. Among the boulders the red granite upon which the castle is built predominates, but many other kinds of rock, obtained no doubt as "heathen" stones, are found; indeed the walls of this castle are a perfect petrological museum, exhibiting a rich variety of colour and differential weathering. In particular there are massive, sharply cut fragments of a dense, blue, closely foliated schistose rock, very large ice-carried boulders of which remain *in situ* on the slopes south of the castle. A close inspection of these boulders, made for me by Mr Bisset, showed distinct traces of their having been operated upon. The masonry of the courtyard wall and partition of the domestic range is coursed rubble not dissimilar to that of the curtains, but smaller stones have been selected and there is greater use of pinnings, which are still more freely employed in the jambs of the inserted door and in the refaced interior of the north curtain.

All the dressed work is in freestone, apparently from Kildrummy, very carefully cut and closely worked over with a small pick-like tool, such as the one which was recovered during the excavation of Kirkcudbright Castle[1] (fig. 17). The style of treatment is similar, and little inferior, to that of the dressed work at Kildrummy Castle. It seems very characteristic of the thirteenth century. In the course of excavation were recovered a large number of moulded fragments. Particularly remark-

[1] See *Proceedings*, vol. xlviii. p. 394.

able are the very fine voussoirs of an arch, with splendid dog-tooth enrichment, shown in fig. 18. The carving of these fragments, which were found in the domestic range, is as masterly as the finest First

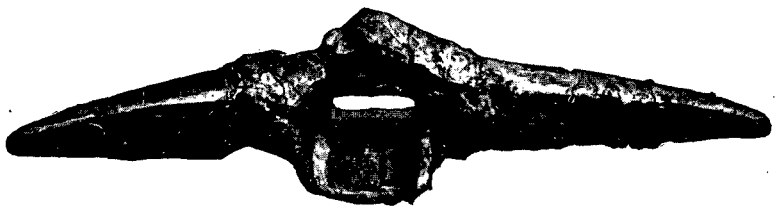


Fig. 17. Iron Pick, 6 inches long, from Kirkcudbright Castle.

Pointed work in any church. Scarcely less vigorous is the fine string-course of early thirteenth-century profile, also from the domestic range, shown in fig. 11. At the gatehouse were found the sill and two jamb-

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 18. Coull Castle: Voussoirs with Dog-tooth Mouldings, found in Domestic Range.

stones of a loophole (see fig. 11), 6 inches in daylight width, with a broad inner bay, narrow chamfered edges externally, and wrought on the sill a downward, steeply raked, fan-tailed splay. No doubt the gatehouse towers would be well equipped with such loopholes, arranged so as to cover the bridge and portal and rake the adjoining curtains. But the most

remarkable stone obtained in the excavations was one from the domestic range, inscribed apparently with the Gothic letters M.S. (fig. 19).

A number of mason's marks occur on the dressed stone-work, and are illustrated in fig. 11.

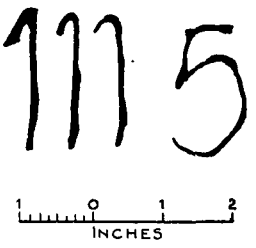


Fig. 19. Coull Castle: Inscribed Stone.

At Loch Coull, along with the dog-toothed voussoirs, inscribed stone, and other carved fragments, is preserved a trough in coarse granite, the basin measuring 1 foot 5 inches long, 1 foot broad, and 6 inches deep, which is said to have come from the castle.

As a result of a full consideration of all the facts as set forth in the preceding paragraphs, I am of opinion that the outline of the castle has now been uncovered about as far as it is still preserved. It will be noted that, supplying the missing gatehouse tower and the tower at the south-west

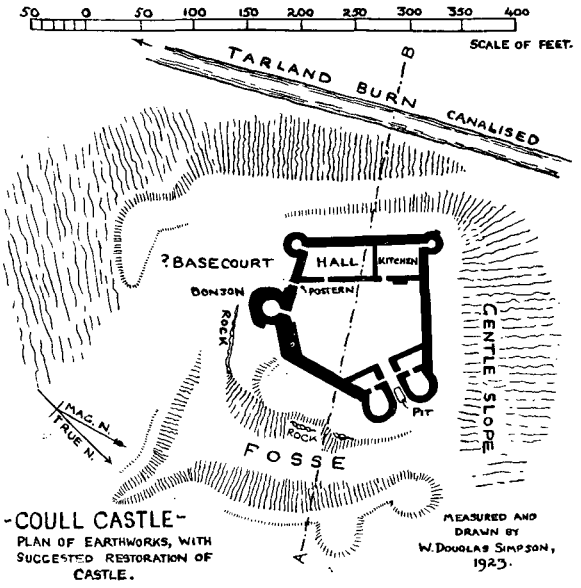


Fig. 20. Coull Castle: Plan of Earthworks.

angle—both of which, we may feel certain, once existed in their respective places—the five towers mentioned in the old *Statistical Account* have been recovered. In fig. 20 an attempt has been made to restore the original plan. A noteworthy feature of this castle is the comparative thinness of the tower walls compared with the massy curtains. This

feature is visible also at the Castles of Tibbers, Moulin, and Lochindorb, and in the gatehouse at Bothwell Castle (see plan, fig. 14). Being the seat of active, not passive defence, an angle-tower relied less on mere solidity than did the inert curtain which it flanked.

Outworks.—Like all the major fortresses of its time, the Castle of Coull was strongly guarded by outer defences of earthwork (fig. 20).

On the west side a natural protection was afforded by the steep, narrow valley of the Tarland Burn, which at present flows in its deepened channel about 40 feet below the base of the west curtain. Doubtless its ancient bed is represented by an upper terrace at a depth of some 25 feet below the curtain (see section, fig. 11). On the north side of the castle this terrace swings round into a fairly gradual slope which extends away towards the church. On the south side the valley of the burn curves round to the east at a distance from the castle (see map, fig. 1), leaving outside its south wall an open space, more or less level, measuring about 125 feet in breadth. There are indications that this area has been used as a base-court. On the west and south sides, which overhang the burn, it is enclosed with a broad bank, which would doubtless carry a stout *jarola* or palisade. Access to this base-court was obtained from the postern in the south curtain. Such an outwork would be very useful for sheltering live stock in time of blockade.[1] On the east side, where the castle faces the higher slopes descending from Mortlich, it is defended by a formidable ditch hewn in the living rock. This ditch (fig. 21) averages 80 feet in breadth and 30 feet in present depth—approximating closely, that is, to the dimensions of the ditch at the contemporary and neighbouring Castle of Kildrummy. Pits sunk near its northern and southern ends revealed bed-rock at a depth of 4 feet 3 inches and 2 feet 7 inches respectively. At its northern end, the ditch seems to have run out upon the slope falling from the castle towards the church. At its southern end, a spur about 30 feet wide and 56 feet in length is sent off towards the south-east, evidently with the intention of enclosing the east and south sides of the base-court, but the work has never been completed. The inner face of the ditch, which is largely precipitous or shelving rock, is carried as a rocky ledge 2 or 3 feet high round the south front of the castle to a point abreast the donjon. Along the east front the ditch has been kept at a distance varying from 30 to 45 feet out from the curtain-wall. On this front the counterscarp is crested by a low mound about 10 feet in breadth, and towards the north end are two conical mounds, of which the southern

[1] Mr Bisset informs me that in his opinion this base-court has been ploughed. "It shows a certain kind of grass which favours man-disturbed land, and there is all round that typical ridge which marks the gap between the first furrow and the unploughed margin."

measures about 36 feet from east to west and 25 feet from north to south, while the northern measures about 16 feet by 35 feet in the same directions. Whether these earthworks on the counterscarp have a defensive significance, or whether they merely represent surface upcast from the ditch, or even rubbish-heaps of more modern date, it is impossible to say. There is no evidence that the ditch was ever wet. Certainly the loose, friable, accumulated earth dug out of the pits sunk to find the original rock-bottom in no way resembled silt.

Present Condition.—The present state of the exposed buildings is very unsatisfactory. All the walls uncovered in the earlier excavations are crumbling rapidly, and great portions have already fallen. Their

[*Photo W. Norrie.*

Fig. 21. Coull Castle: Ditch, looking south. (The eminence in the rear is the Gallowhill.)

decay is chiefly due to the large amount of mortar in the hearting of the walls, which renders them specially liable to suffer from atmospheric agencies and growth of plants. The surface mortar is everywhere "dead," having lost all adhesive power, and in many cases is running down into sand. The wall-heads are in a bad condition, the stones being slack and the joints dirty. In most places the body of the walls seems sound enough. The dressings in Kildrummy freestone have stood exposure well, except for an occasional block built *en délit*, where decay has been very rapid. One such face-bedded stone, in the south jamb of the south door into the domestic range, has spalled away almost entirely. Weathering seems to have little affected the boulders of metamorphic rock in the walls, but the red granite is rather more liable to waste through the predominance of felspar in its composition.

An ancient and noble thorn tree (fig. 15), rooted in the west curtain

just at the junction of the partition in the domestic range, has greatly disturbed both these walls. Much damage is being done to the ruins by sheep.

To put these remains in order would be a very costly task. The surface joints would have to be raked thoroughly out in order to eliminate "dead" mortar, blown dirt, and vegetation; the facings should be tamped in cement, pointed up with lime, and made good where necessary in stone, the interiors re-grouted and the wall-heads weather-proofed.

Except for sporadic damage by sheep and rabbits, the condition of the earthworks is good.

As a temporary measure, all the heads of walling exposed by excavation have been covered carefully over with sods. Where excavation was carried below the foundations, these have been covered in again, in order to prevent damage by frost. For a similar reason the garderobe flue in the donjon has been closed above. All trenches not exposing structure were filled in and returfed, except the pit in the courtyard showing the ancient level, and the sections across the semicircular area on the east front, proving this to have been outside the building. The soil-slopes above the gatehouse pit have been blanketed with turf to prevent subsidence.

III. Description of the Pottery and other Relics.

Dr Marshall Mackenzie has placed in my hands an assortment of relics, a list of which follows, recovered by him during the earlier excavations. Unfortunately, no record is available as to where and under what associations these objects were found. For the purposes of the present survey, objects belonging to this collection will be catalogued under the reference letter M:—

42 shards of pottery; 1 piece of glass; 2 iron mountings or bars for strengthening a door; iron pin with eyehole; hinge-pivot; key; pair of smith's tongs; 3 fragments of an iron pot; mounting with movable handle or hook; iron rod; 2 nails; 4 pieces of lead; piece of slag; 2 oyster-shells, deer-horn, and bones.

Outside the donjon, in the angle between it and the east curtain, an extensive midden deposit was discovered, consisting of fine, loose, dark earth highly charged with relics. It took the form of a talus about 6 feet deep, blanketing the base of the tower and curtain, and thinning out towards the ditch. This deposit was cleared out down to the *solum*, and as far back from the walls as time allowed, and the contents carefully riddled through a ½-inch mesh. A remarkable thing about this

midden was the complete absence of charcoal. From it the following objects (hereafter referred to under reference letter A) were recovered:—

51 shards of pottery; 21 nails; hunting or flaying knife, with wooden handle; domestic knife; part of a small hinge; fragment of hollow iron rod; bung in deer-horn; portion of deer-horn cut with knife; part of a wooden board; small branch or twig; oyster-shell and bones.

A second and smaller midden deposit was found along the outside of the north-west tower, and its contents secured by riddling. The relics, catalogued below, are referred to under the letter B:—

9 shards of pottery; 6 nails; 1 piece of deer-horn; bones and charcoal.

A third deposit, also apparently a midden, was unearthed among the obscure foundations immediately south of the gatehouse. The relics (referred to hereafter under the letter C) are as follows:—

1 shard of pottery; 51 nails; mass of slag; bones and charcoal.

From the gatehouse were recovered the following (reference letter D):—

7 shards of pottery; 7 fragments thick green glass; 7 fragments thick blue glass; 2 fragments thin blue glass; half a sling-ball in freestone; 122 nails; hollow or reeded nail, fused on to stone; bleb of iron fused on to gate-tower; hinge-pivot; 35 indeterminate small fragments of rusted iron; charcoal; masses of slag and fused matter; piece of bark.

In the pit were found the following (reference letters D P):—

Fragment of hinge-pivot; iron ferrule; 31 nails; arrow-head; 3 indeterminate rusted iron fragments; charcoal of large wood; charcoal of brushwood; unburnt twig; oyster-shell and bones.

Under the reference letter E are grouped the following miscellaneous "finds":—

8 nails, piece of horn, charcoal, all from inside of west curtain, in kitchen; 16 shards of pottery, from various places; iron tang, found by Mr Robert F. M. Watson, M.A., Schoolhouse, Coull, between two jamb-stones of south door into domestic range.

Pottery.—Among all this miscellaneous assortment of relics the greatest interest attaches to the pottery (fig. 22), from the evidences of chronological horizon which its characteristics afford. The study of mediæval pottery is a vast subject, in which an enormous amount of research still waits to be done, particularly in Scotland, before a completely scientific chronological classification can be formulated. None the less, it has already been possible to assign certain well-known types to specific periods; and a general survey of the shards from Coull Castle admits of important correlations with previous discoveries of mediæval pottery under associated circumstances that leave us in little doubt as to the chronological horizon indicated.

Of the 126 potsherds found, all except 34 exhibit glaze in good preservation or show signs, more or less distinct, of having been glazed originally; but it would be rash to assert that among these 34 shards some may not once have been glazed. As usual in mediæval

Fig. 22. Coull Castle: Pottery found during Excavations.

ware, the glazed fragments are treated with a lead glaze, the colouring—which ranges through all shades between deep bluish-green to bright yellow—having been obtained by the admixture of oxides of copper. In some of the fragments it would appear that the lead glaze had been applied without such admixture, its effect then being simply to deepen the natural colour of the ware, a shard of dirty-white clay thus producing a yellowish glaze.

The most complete fragment of a vessel is the segment of the neck of a large pitcher with part of one handle, A 1 (fig. 22, No. 1). The internal diameter of the mouth of this vessel had been 68 mm., and the thickness of its walls varies from 3 mm. to 6 mm. Its brim, thickened to 12 mm., is rounded and flattish on top, and slightly everted. The neck is ornamented by a series of horizontal, faintly raised ridges. At the base of the neck is a rib of bolder profile, below which a portion of the swelling body of the vessel is preserved. In the interior of the neck a pronounced hollow or incurved area is formed by the thinning off of the wall below the rim, and the surface is marked by faint horizontal striations produced by the potter's finger applied to the revolving vessel. The handle is somewhat oval in section, being about 26 mm. in greatest thickness (horizontally), where it breaks off. Near its attachment to the neck it broadens, and is fixed on immediately below the brim, two broad, deepish, leaf-shaped depressions being formed by the thumb drawing down the clay at either side. Rounded below, the handle is slightly ribbed on the upper surface. It has curved somewhat rapidly round from its upper attachment, near the brim, to its lower attachment, now lost, on the swelling body of the pitcher. This vessel is formed in a finely textured, light red ware, and is coated over the whole of its exterior with a reddish glaze.

Several other portions of handles belonging to similar vessels were found. M 1 (fig. 22, No. 4) is the fragment of a handle about 22 mm. in diameter, ornamented with closely set ribs of semicircular profile which run lengthwise along the handle, producing a pleasing fluted effect. It is still attached at its lower extremity to a small part of the body of a large pitcher, and the way in which the handle is fixed on shows that this vessel must have been of a cylindrical or oviform rather than a globular shape. At the junction of the handle are leaf-shaped depressions of the usual type but somewhat shallow. The wall of the vessel has been about 5 mm. thick. It is formed in a pale red ware of fine texture, coated with a deep blue-green glaze. The interior is unglazed, and ornamented by the usual horizontal striations. A 2 (fig. 22, No. 2) is a fragment of a handle ribbed or fluted on the upper surface only, with its lower attachment to the vessel. It is similar in most respects to that previously described, but is larger (diameter, 26 mm.), and is made of a much coarser, gritty, ill-levigated dark grey ware from which the brown exterior glaze has almost perished. The basal thumb-marks in this specimen are very large and deep. The interior surface of the vessel, which seems to have been unglazed, is marked, instead of the usual horizontal striations, by a series of rather deep vertical hollows impressed by the finger. Here again the form of pitcher indicated by the profile of the fragment is

cylindrical, not globular. M 11 (fig. 22, No. 10) is part of a large handle of elliptical section, 31 mm. in greatest (horizontal) diameter, thickening to the attachment, which is lost, and ribbed on the upper surface only. It is made of a fine-textured ware, almost brick-red, and in its present state exhibits no trace of glaze. M 10 (fig. 22, No. 9) is a somewhat similar handle, smaller, circular in section, with a diameter at the thinner end of 22 mm., ribbed all round but more closely on the upper surface, on which it is pierced by a series of small puncturings irregularly dispersed. It is made of a fine light red ware with a brownish glaze.

A different type of handle is shown by the two fragments M 3 and M 4 (fig. 22, Nos. 6, 7), evidently from the same vessel. It is formed of a flat strip of clay, 40 mm. broad and 9 mm. thick, bent into a slightly curved section and rounded off at the edges. The concave surface has formed the upper side of the handle, which has been covered with a rich dark green glaze. A series of deep, irregular punctulations occurs on the upper surface of the handle, being arranged apparently in rough curved lines crossing the handle at intervals of about 25 mm. One of these fragments (M 4) shows the commencement of the basal attachment, with part of two thumb-marks. The material is a fine light red clay. M 2 (fig. 22, No. 5) is obviously part of the wall of the same or a very similar vessel, exhibiting the bases of two closely set leaf-shaped depressions or thumb-marks below the attachment of a handle. The form is that of a cylindrical pitcher. The ware is light red, finely textured, 4 mm. thick, with a deep green glaze, very lustrous. The interior is unglazed, and instead of the usual regular striations appears to have been smeared over carefully with the finger before firing.

B 1 (fig. 22, No. 3) is a small part of a pitcher showing the brim and the affixment of a handle (which has gone), with parts of the usual lateral thumb-marks. Along the exterior lip of the slightly everted rim is an upraised fillet. The fragment is in pale red ware, very finely textured, glazed on the exterior with a moss-green tint. Along the top of the brim is a dark green line. M 5 and M 9 seem to be portions of the same vessel, a ewer in dirty-white ware with a deep blue-green, highly lustrous glaze. M 5 is part of the rim with a small portion of the channel of a spout opening level with the rim. M 9 (fig. 22, No. 8) is a small portion of a handle, oval in section, 14 mm. in greatest diameter, in the same ware and glaze. M 8 is part of the brim of a large vessel, coated on the exterior with a cinnamon-brown glaze which extends over the lip and a little down the interior wall. Along the top of the brim runs a darker band, and there are indications of patterning in a darker hue on the face. The material is a finely grained, pale red clay, striated on the inner face. A similar ware, rather paler in the body, but with the same cinnamon-

brown glaze veined with darker bands, is represented by the shard M 13. A 18 is a small shard also of similar ware and veined glaze, exhibiting a vertical band of darker colour 7 mm. broad.

B 2 is a shard of a different type, in dirty-white ware, with vertical interior face, sharp inner lip, flat-topped brim, and an external chamfered lip uniting with the face below by a graceful incurve. The wall of the vessel is 3 mm. thick, and the greatest thickness of the brim is 9 mm. The exterior has been treated with an uncoloured glaze, below which is pigmented ornamentation consisting of a thin dark blue band immediately under the brim, and at 7 mm. below it another band forming the upper border of a zone of chevroned ornament in brown and yellow. Mr Alexander O. Curle, F.S.A., F.S.A.Scot., has called my attention to a small shard of similar coloured ware found at Kirkcudbright Castle. A vessel similarly coloured and ascribed to the thirteenth or fourteenth century is figured in the Catalogue of the Collection of London Antiquities, Guildhall Museum, Plate lxvi., No. 11, and p. 177.

M 32 and M 33 are buff-coloured shards, the former apparently unglazed, and the latter showing slight traces of a deep green glaze. Both have belonged to tall cylindrical vessels with walls about 5 mm. thick. The walls have inclined somewhat towards the base, which has been slightly convex. To steady the vessel, struts have been formed at intervals by drawing down the clay of the side wall between finger and thumb, leaving a perfectly preserved thumb-print in the soft material.[1] M 28 exhibits a similar strut; but, the vessel being more globular in shape, the strut is drawn out from the base instead of down from the side wall. Instead of the usual strut formed by pinching between finger and thumb, A 17 has a little foot carefully wrought in the clay. M 27, M 34, and E 6 are portions of shallow vessels with flat bases showing no signs of struts. In A 15 we have a fragment of the base of a large vessel in coarse dark greyish-red ware. The base is flat, and along its edge a sort of rough attempt at ornament has been made by a series of thumb impressions set about 10 mm. apart, the clay not being drawn downwards into a strut.

M 6 is part of the side of a tall cylindrical vessel in buff-coloured ware, coated externally with a deep, highly lustrous green glaze. It displays narrow vertical ribs set about 15 mm. apart, but diverging somewhat from one end. Between these bands occur vertical rows of rough leaf-shaped processes of clay set closely together, and worked up from the surface but not applied to it. A 5 is a portion of a massively built vessel in buff ware, with a light yellow glaze on the interior, which is smooth,

[1] These thumb-prints were submitted for examination to Mr W. Clark Souter, M.D., D.O., Aberdeen, who reports that it is impossible to infer from them as to the sex of the potter.

and a more greenish mottled glaze on the exterior, which is boldly ribbed or cordoned. M 14, a fragment of pale red ware with a deep green external glaze, has been ornamented with vertical fillets of flattish form, 3 mm. broad and set 11 mm. apart. A 4, in brick-red ware, is ornamented with shallow ribs about 3 mm. broad and set closely together, and is covered with a rich dark green glaze, which appears blue in the hollow spaces and lighter on the ribs. The walls of this handsome vessel are 4 mm. thick.

Two fragments (A 7 and A 9) of a rather thin dark grey coarse ware, with a dirty-green external glaze and a blackish incrustation on the interior, show for ornament a horizontal ridge which has been toothed by rough strokes drawn across it with a thin, sharp instrument. There are a large number of shards of buff ware finely textured, smeared smooth on the inside and smooth or faintly ribbed on the exterior, with a pale brown or dark yellow glaze. These shards are usually about 5 mm. thick, and some of them have evidently belonged to large vessels. Two shards (M 12 and E 9) of a hard, finely textured, brick-coloured body, 4 mm. thick, smoothly striated on the inside, are coated on the outside with a very lustrous brown-black glaze (? oxide of iron), resembling Cistercian ware; similar pottery was discovered at the Kildrummy Castle excavations in 1919. There are also portions of the dark, coarse and gritty, nondescript vessels used for cooking purposes, blackened with fire.

Viewing this pottery from Coull Castle in all its characteristics, little difficulty will be found in assigning to it an approximate chronological horizon. The cylindrical or bag-shaped form of pitcher indicated by some of the shards presumes a date not later than *circa* 1400, after which time the pitchers tended to become more globular in form.[1] The handles having leaf-shaped depressions at their junctions with the vessel are characteristic of the fourteenth century, as are also the convex bases having struts formed by drawing the clay of the side walls down betwixt finger and thumb. It has been found that these basal struts become more numerous in proportion to the lateness of the vessel. A green-glazed pitcher in the British Museum, assigned to the early fourteenth century,[2] has a continuous series of such struts forming a crinkled base-rim all round the vessel. The Coull pottery shows an earlier stage of development, having basal struts only at intervals round the rim. Making allowance for the fact that the sequence of styles was doubtless somewhat

[1] It must not, however, be assumed that every globular pitcher is necessarily late. In the British Museum is a vessel of markedly oviform body, ornamented with a hunting scene in relief, the figures of which are late twelfth or early thirteenth century in character. See R. L. Hobson, "Medieval Pottery found in England," *Archæological Journal*, vol. lix. p. 5 and fig. 1.

[2] British Museum, *Guide to the English Pottery and Porcelain in the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography*, 3rd edition, 1923, p. 6 and fig. 5.

later in Scotland than in England, it is scarcely possible to assign the Coull pottery to a date later than, if as late as, the period ascribed to the British Museum vessel mentioned—that is, in the early years of the fourteenth century. This inference is confirmed otherwise by the fragment of a base (A 15) having thumb impressions not drawn down into a strut, which is an earlier stage of the same *motif*. Bases with intermittent struts were found in the excavation of Kirkcudbright Castle, a thirteenth-century castle destroyed in the Wars of Independence, from which also were recovered fluted or reeded handles with deep leaf-shaped depressions at the junction with the vessel, very similar in character to those found at Coull.[1] Punctured and notched ornament made with a pointed stick, such as occurs on several of the Coull shards (M 10, M 3, M 4, A 7, A 9), is also characteristic of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The pottery found at another early stronghold in Aberdeenshire, Dundarg Castle,[2] which stood a famous siege in 1334, included fragments with similar ornament, fluted handles having leaf-shaped depressions uniting with the neck of the pitcher just below the rim, and slightly convex bases with intermittent struts in groups of three; all not dissimilar to the corresponding forms from Coull. The bases from Dundarg, however, seem to belong to a slightly more advanced type. The thinness of the ware from Coull is also an early characteristic. Ornamentation formed by leaf-shaped processes of clay, such as found on the shard M 6, and the broad type of handle with a shallow longitudinal groove, indicated by the fragments M 3 and M 4, are both paralleled in the pottery of the thirteenth or early fourteenth century recovered from a moated mound at Kidsneuk, Ayrshire.[3] Other instances of this type of handle occur in a pitcher, now in the National Museum of Antiquities, found at Kinghorn, containing coins of Robert I., Edward I. and II., and in a fine three-handled pitcher (fig. 23) from Glasgow, in the same collection, and assigned to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The handles of this pitcher are almost identical with the corresponding handles from Coull.

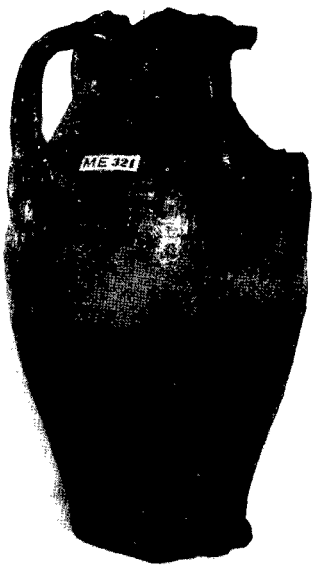


Fig. 23. Pitcher from Glasgow.

[1] See *Proceedings*, vol. xlviii. pp. 390–4. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 190–1. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. lii. pp. 60–70.

On the whole, therefore, having all these facts in view, it seems likely that the pottery from Coull Castle must be assigned to a date not later than the opening years of the fourteenth century; the period suggested both by correlations with other pottery ascribed to about this date, and also by inferences drawn from the stage of development indicated by the ware itself.

Ironwork.—The most interesting piece of ironwork found was the smith's tongs (M 60), 34 cm. long, in good preservation save for about two-thirds of one handle which are awanting. M 59, a straight rod of iron 22½ cm. long, with a slight knob at one end, may be the missing handle, but the other one is curved. M 56, M 57, and M 58 are fragments of a cast-iron pot, with sides 2 mm. thick. When pieced together they indicate a vessel of about 25 cm. in greatest diameter. The surface has been ornamented by two horizontal fillets about 25 mm. apart. M 63 may be attachment of a handle to this vessel. It consists of a hook with a knob at the upper end inserted in a hole provided in a strip of iron 23 mm. broad, which in its present fragmentary state is about 10 cm. long and sharply incurved. M 44 and M 46 seem to be bars for strengthening a wooden door: the former, which is nearly 35 cm. long, 33 mm. broad, and 6 mm. thick, is slightly expanded, hollowed, and pointed into a tongue-like form at one end; while the latter, about 45 cm. long, 39 mm. broad, and 10 mm. thick, is flat on the inside, slightly rounded outside, and furnished at either end with a stout spike, about 55 mm. long, for attaching it to the wooden framework. M 48 and D 18 are hinge-pivots, 177 mm. and 84 mm. in length respectively, the latter, which was found near the gate pit, being encrusted with the charcoal amid which it lay embedded. D P 4 is a fragment of another hinge-pivot also from the pit, and A 49 is a wasted remnant of a hinge of small size. M 47 is a large pointed pin, 26 cm. long, 3 cm. broad at the head, and about 14 mm. thick. The head is pierced by an eye roughly oval in shape, 3 cm. long and 13 mm. in greatest width. M 45, which is about 16 cm. long, seems to be a sort of key for raising a hasp.

In A 48 (fig. 24, No. 2) we have an interesting knife of graceful shape. The one-edged blade is 9 cm. long, 17 mm. in greatest breadth, and 6 mm. in greatest thickness. The handle is of wood much wasted, and 47 mm. in length. This would apparently have been a flaying knife. A 50 is a portion of a slender blade of more domestic use.

D P 5 (fig. 24, No. 3) is a barbed arrow-head, 52 mm. long, with the point bent back as if by impact, and still retaining part of the wooden shaft in the socket. D P 6 (fig. 24, No. 4) is an iron ferrule, 48 mm. long, preserving in the socket a fragment of wood. A 50 (fig. 24, No. 1), a pointed iron implement 117 mm. long, is hollow at the broader end. Of the 241 nails

found in the course of the excavations, it is unnecessary to say more than that they vary in length from 44 mm. to 116 mm., that they are all four-sided in section, and that two types of head are shown, one quadrilateral and hammer-shaped, and the other flat and circular, measuring sometimes as much as 25 mm. in diameter.

Leadwork.—Two crumpled fragments of roofing lead (M 49 and M 50) were found, 2·5 mm. thick, and covered with a whitish incrustation; also a piece of lead (M 52) in the form of a roughly oval strip, varying

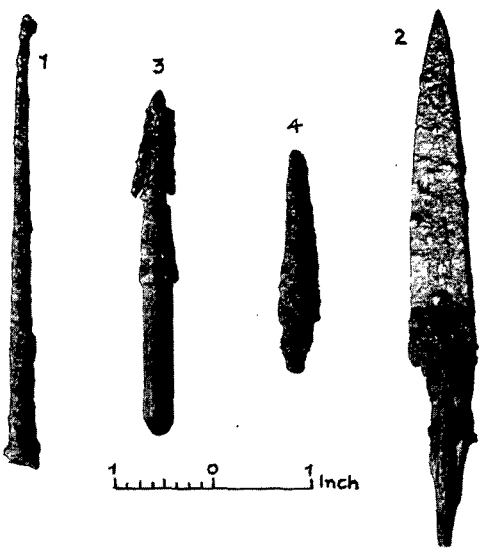


Fig. 24. Coull Castle: Iron Objects found during Excavations.

from 7 to 16 mm. broad, about 4 mm. thick, and 45 mm. in greatest interior diameter, which had been cut with a knife out of a single mass. M 51 is a mass of melted lead, caught up in which are wood shavings.

Glass.—Seven fragments found within a foot of the surface, when pieced together, restored the base and a considerable portion of the side of a bottle (D 19), of modern type. Two pieces of thin glass of a pale blue hue, belonging to a vessel (D 20) about 40 mm. in diameter with walls 2 mm. thick, found outside the gatehouse tower, may perhaps be of greater antiquity. There were also found seven fragments (D 9–15) of a large bottle in olive-green glass 6 mm. thick, having a deep "kick-

up" in the base, which has been about 95 mm. in diameter. From the base, the sides of the bottle have risen with a graceful inward curve not unlike that of a common form of modern flower vase. A fragment of the neck of the bottle indicates an external diameter of about 36 mm. The surface of this glass is much wasted and iridescent. It belongs to a common type of eighteenth-century bottle. The fragment of white glass M 42, showing a radial pattern on base, is obviously modern.

Horn.—A 42 is a stopper or bung in deer-horn, cut with a knife out of a tine. It is 18 mm. in diameter at the greater end, 15 mm. at the smaller end, and 17 mm. long. A 47 is a portion of deer-horn, oval in section, 34 mm. in greatest diameter, and about 44 mm. long. One end exhibits a smooth-cut surface; the other end, which is much broken and marked by knife-cuts, has been wrought into a toothed or notched shape.

Wood.—A 43 is a portion, 146 mm. long, of a piece of pine-wood 40 mm. broad, 13 mm. thick on one edge and 8 mm. thick on the other. One end is cut square, the other broken off.[1]

Stone.—D 8 is half a sling-ball in freestone, 66 mm. in diameter.

Miscellaneous.—Encrusted on to the battered base of the donjon immediately below the vent from the garderobe was a mass of hard brown excremental matter in a quasi-fossilised condition, much commingled with *débris* and lime. By direction of my friend Professor James Hendrick, B.Sc., F.I.C., of the Chair of Agriculture, Aberdeen University, Mr George Newlands, M.A., B.Sc., A.I.C., of the Research Department, North of Scotland College of Agriculture, has been good enough to furnish the following chemical report:—

"The material examined is a soft, friable, concretionary deposit with open structure. The walls of the cavities are coated with yellow-coloured skin, but the fractured material has a pinkish buff colour. On application of acid there is free effervescence, indicating the presence of calcium carbonate. The residue, insoluble in the acid, constitutes the bulk of the material, and consists of granitic fragments and minerals derived from granite, namely pink felspar, quartz, and partially weathered biotite of a golden-brown colour. Phosphate was tested for and found to be present in abundance."

Mr Newlands has also kindly supplied the following report upon the fused stony matter found at the gatehouse:—

"The material examined consists mainly of granitic fragments of various sizes, composed of quartz, white felspar, and black mica. Many of the fragments have fused glassy surfaces and rounded edges, while some have assumed a globular shape. Some portions are quite porous and frothy in structure, having the appearance of a slag or of a vesicular lava. In some cases fragments

[1] Among wooden relics from Coull Castle may be noted a table in dark oak, said to have been made "from the wood of the sluices of Coull Castle," now in the possession of Mr R. Milne, Aboyne.

of smaller sizes occur, filling up the spaces between larger angular pieces, thereby suggesting a binding material. On being tested with acid the infilling material effervesced. Some of the pieces are of black iron-like appearance, but are too light in weight to contain much iron, and on examination with the petrological microscope were found to be siliceous rock material in a thoroughly fused condition."

On the suggestion of Professor Hendrick, a sample of the soil from midden A was submitted to Mr Newlands for examination, with the following result:—

"The material examined was earth-like in appearance and consisted mainly of granitic *débris*. It differed, however, from an ordinary granitic soil in having a considerable amount of carbonate present, and in containing much more phosphatic material than such a soil. About 4 per cent. by weight of the dried material was organic matter, this being roughly estimated by finding the loss in weight after igniting and recarbonating the previously dried material."

Mr Macgregor Skene, D.Sc., of the Botany Department, Aberdeen University, assisted by Miss Dorothy G. Downie, B.Sc., B.Sc. (For.), has been good enough to supply the following report upon the vegetable remains:—

"*Unburnt Wood.*—D P. 3, twig of *Pinus sylvestris*, the Scots pine. A 43 (fragment of board), the same. A 44, twig of hawthorn. D 16, bark of Scots pine.

"*Charcoal.*—Oak abundant in all examples; and in addition, *probably* hazel from kitchen (catalogued under reference E), and in brushwood from pit (abundant in both); one piece of willow from pit; one piece of what seems to be a very slow grown elm from midden C."

To Mr Robert M. Neill, M.C., M.A., F.R.M.S., of the Natural History Department, Aberdeen University, I am indebted for the following report on the bones, large quantities of which were recovered in the course of the excavations.

"Bone remains were found at eight spots within the precincts of the castle site. They consist in the main of bones of oxen, red deer, pig, and sheep. All the bones appear to be of approximately the same age, and to be the refuse from the cooking-pot. Most of them have been broken across into short fragments. Some pieces of long bones show splitting for marrow. A number show hacks and cuts made by a heavy instrument.

"Charred or calcined bones were uncommon. Odd fragments of calcined bone occurred here and there, but only in one spot (gatehouse pit) was a *cache* (about four handfuls) of calcined bones of ox found.

"As a typical example of a *cache*, that from the north-west tower midden-deposit might be taken. It contained the following:—

"Ox, *Bos taurus* (*Linn.*); twenty-seven fragments of hind-limb and rib bones, long bones split, many bones fractured by blunt instrument; two small fragments of vertebræ, one being part of atlas vertebra; one terminal phalange of foot.

"Red deer, *Cervus elaphus* (*Linn.*); thirty-four pieces of leg and rib bones from 1 to 4 inches long, many split; two small fragments of pelvis, 1½ inch and 2 inches in length; a single terminal phalange of foot.

"Sheep, *Ovis sp.*; piece of scapula; eight fragments of rib bones.

"Pig, *Sus scrofa (Linn.)*; two bones of foot; molar tooth; piece of boar's tusk.

"Roe deer, *Capreolus capreolus (Linn.)*; two terminal phalanges of foot.

"Rabbit, *Lepus (oryctolagus) cuniculus*; five leg-bones and odd ribs.

"Pigeon, *Columba sp.*; leg-bone and sacral region.

"Miscellaneous: a *centrum* of a teleostean fish vertebra, from its size possibly a salmon of 8-10 lb.; *os calcis* of a small horse; fragment of a sheep vertebra shorn clean through by a swinging cut and showing a perfectly even-cut face.

"The ox bones indicated animals of varying size but smaller than recent oxen. No skulls or horns were found. It is to be hoped that the further excavations contemplated without the castle may result in the discovery of the skulls, so that an accurate identification of the particular breed may be made.

"In addition to bones of adult wild boar, pig bones of a smaller size may indicate a domestic breed.

"Rabbit remains were numerous, but as the castle site is at the present day swarming with rabbits, it is difficult to determine just how far they belong to the bone deposits under discussion. Undoubtedly many are of recent date.

"An interesting fact emerging from a survey of the bones generally is that they are nearly all remains of 'quarters' and 'ribs' of beef, venison, etc. Two fragments of red deer horn represent the only pieces of skulls of any kind found (except rabbit). Vertebræ are very few, and chiefly from the hinder lumbar region; no cervical or thoracic vertebræ occur at all. This suggests that the slaughtering and dressing of the animals was done without the castle, and only certain well-defined parts, those most highly esteemed for food, were brought in to be hacked up for the pot. It will be interesting to see how far this may be confirmed during further excavations.

"Of remains of invertebrate animals only a few oyster shells were found."

It is a pleasure to add that the entire collection of relics from these excavations has been presented by Dr Marshall Mackenzie to the Anthropological Museum, Marischal College, University of Aberdeen.

IV. Conclusions.

The cardinal problem arising out of these excavations is of course in reference to the final fate of the castle. That its end was sudden and violent there is no room to doubt. The evidences of catastrophe at the gatehouse—the charred woodwork and twisted nails in and around the pit, the fused stone and other tell-tale witnesses to a conflagration—would in themselves be decisive on this point; but they by no means stand alone. In all quarters of the building charcoal was frequent, even in places quite impossible for midden deposits—for example, in the interiors of the towers. The courtyard has not yet been cleared, but the scree-slope of the excavation made to expose the domestic range everywhere yields charred matter if raked down with a walking-stick.

Nor do the evidences of destruction rest here. I am convinced that they may be seen also in the solid framework of the building itself. It will be noted that the two angle-towers flanking the north curtain are mere fragments of wall. Half the north-west tower has been clean destroyed right to the foundations, while of the north-east or gatehouse tower only a small segment remains. Its companion tower, which we can hardly doubt must have flanked the opposite side of the entry, has disappeared entirely. So also has the south-west angle-tower. On either side of it, west and south, the curtain-walls have been removed right down to the foundations. At the point where it reaches the highest level, the enormously strong east curtain has suffered a similar fate.

Great caution is clearly necessary on this matter, because we know that the ruins were being plundered at the close of the eighteenth century; and, if the old *Statistical Account* is really to be trusted in its statement that five towers were then exposed, it is evident that two must since have disappeared. But even making every allowance for such comparatively recent spoiling, it seems to me that distinct evidence still remains of deliberate demolition. The clean, abrupt vertical breaches straight across the east and south curtain, carried down in each case right to the foundations, do not in the least resemble the kind of destruction produced by the haphazard pulling to pieces of walls for lime or building material. And the same remark holds true of the angle-towers, as a glance at the illustrations (figs. 12 and 13) will show. Looking at the half of the north-west tower which still remains, it is difficult to resist the conviction that this tower has been deliberately placed *hors de combat* by the removal of a large segment of its circumference—like the treatment meted out to the donjon of Bothwell Castle by the Scots when they won it back from Edward III. in 1337. It is highly suggestive to recall that the circumference of the towers unearthed in the eighteenth century could not be measured "on account of their broken state" (see p. 54 above).

Two facts will forcibly impress themselves upon all who view the ruins in their present condition.

1. *The destruction has taken place precisely where such destruction would be, from a military view-point, most telling.* Effectively and economically to dismantle a fortress, the obvious course for a mediæval engineer was to make great breaches in the curtains and flanking towers; and this is just what seems to have been done at Coull. It is highly significant that the domestic range shows no trace of such breaching, and its condition to-day seems to be the natural result of gradual decay.

2. *The destruction has been greatest in places where spoliation of the*

walls for utilitarian purposes is least likely to have occurred. For example, the west curtain is removed to within a foot or two of its foundations, and in its southern portion even these have disappeared entirely. But this curtain, lying along the edge of the Tarland Burn, was of all parts of the castle the most unsuited to spoilers by reason of its inaccessibility. It is hardly possible to conceive how they could have selected for removal this curtain, and left untouched the wall of the domestic range, which fronts the open courtyard, and through or over which the materials of the curtain would have to be carted away. On the other hand, to a military engineer, anxious to dismantle the castle as thoroughly, as easily, and as speedily as possible, no course would be more natural than to throw this curtain over into the Tarland Burn.

On this matter the reader must form his own judgment. I can only place on record my personal strong conviction—which is shared by Dr Marshall Mackenzie and by others who watched the excavations—that the present ruinous condition of the castle is by no means wholly, or even mainly, due to modern spoliation, but that the indications are still legible of deliberate military dismantlement. In any case, the evidences of conflagration found in all parts of the building make it certain that the end of the castle was a violent one.

When did this catastrophe occur? Burning might have happened at any period; but, if the case for dismantlement be conceded, destruction on such a scale at once suggests the War of Independence.

It is well known that Bruce's policy was to "slight" a castle whenever he captured one, as his small field army was never sufficient to detach garrisons for these fortresses. As the *Chronicle of Lanercost* states, in describing how the Scots dealt with Roxburgh Castle, "they razed to the ground the whole of that beautiful castle, just as they did other castles which they succeeded in taking, lest the English should ever hereafter be able to lord it over the land through holding the castles."[1] In the case of the older type of fortress constructed of earth and timber, it would be sufficient to burn the wooden defences and the buildings within the enclosure; and that this was the usual procedure is proved by the fact that the earthworks of several castles of this early type, known to have been destroyed in the wars of the fourteenth century, such as Lochmaben and Dumfries, still survive in good preservation. But in the case of fortresses in stone and lime there is ample evidence, both literary and archæological, that destruction of the masonry was usually carried out on a very thorough scale, and that the frequent references in mediæval chroniclers to *prostrationes* and *fractiones* of castles were no empty phrases. On this point Barbour's language is

[1] *Chronicle of Lanercost*, trans. Sir Herbert Maxwell, p. 204.

emphatic again and again. Thus, after Sir James Douglas had captured his own "aventurus castell," we are told—

> "That he all tumlit doune the wall
> And distroit the hous all."[1]

Of Forfar Castle Barbour writes:—

> "And syne gert brek doune the wall
> And fordid well and castell all."[2]

And after William Bunnock's daring ruse had won the Peel of Linlithgow, Bruce "gert doun driff it to the ground."[3] In the same way the King, after the fall of Roxburgh Castle, sends his brother Edward

> ". . . to tummyll it doune
> Bath tour, castell, and dungeoune
> And he com with gret cumpany
> And gert travale so besaly
> That tour and wall rycht to the ground
> War tumlyt in ane litill stound."[4]

The fate of the two greatest castles in the kingdom, Edinburgh and Stirling, is described in very similar words:—

> "And gert myne doune all halely,
> Bath tour and wall richt to the ground."

> "The castell and the towrys syne
> Richt to the grund doune gert he myne."[5]

More generally, we are told how Sir Edward de Bruce, after over-running Galloway and Nithsdale, had

> ". . . doungyn doune the castellis all
> Richt in the dik, bath tour and wall."[6]

In the case of Perth, similar treatment was inflicted on the fortified *enceinte* of a town:—

> "And syne, the towris everilkane
> And wallis gert he tummyll doune:
> He levit nocht about that toune
> Tour standand, stane, no wall,
> That he na haly gert distroy all."[7]

That all this language is no exaggeration is clearly shown in those castles, such as Bothwell and Dirleton, where visible traces of extensive destruction have survived to our own time—without the element of perplexity induced at Coull by subsequent gradual decay or spoliation—

[1] Barbour's *Bruce*, ed. W. M. Mackenzie, p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 156. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 182. [5] *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 245. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 190. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

through the fragments of the dismantled building having been incorporated, just as they stood, in a later restoration.

With the supposition that Coull Castle was destroyed in the War of Independence, its recorded history, though meagre, seems to stand in full agreement; for there is no evidence, so far as I can find, of its having been inhabited subsequently to that period. True, the "Manor of Coull" is mentioned as the place of the head-court of the barony in the Learney Charter of 1377-84; but, even if it be conceded—what is highly doubtful—that "manor" can be equated with "castle," every student of mediæval documents is fully aware how frequently a castle is referred to as the capital messuage of a fief, and the place for rendering aids and services, long after we have positive evidence that the castle was deserted. This is particularly true, for example, in the case of the twelfth-century *mottes* or castles of earthwork and timber, whose mounds continued to be the *venue* of feudal courts generations after they had been abandoned for residential purposes. To quote one instance only, Dumfries Castle was destroyed as part of the conditions imposed by England upon David II. at his release in 1357: yet in 1369 we find Archibald the Grim, Earl of Douglas, bound by a charter to pay, for his lordship in Galloway, a white rose in blench ferme yearly at the Castle of Dumfries.[1]

In the same way the mention of "the barony of Coull and O'Neill, with the fortalice thereof," in the Countess Isabella's resignation of 1389, may be simply (as occurs again and again) the repetition in legal phraseology of reference to a castle as one of the pertinents of a fief long after its residential character had ceased. That this is indeed the case is strongly hinted by the absence of any mention of the castle in the charters of Coull granted subsequently by Robert III. and Albany. The only decisive test would be reference to the castle as an inhabited place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, or the existence of writs dated from it during that time. Of neither of these have I been able to find a trace. It seems hardly possible that, if a powerful castle like Coull had been in commission during these centuries, documentary evidence of its inhabitation would not have survived.

We have seen that Coull Castle during the War of Independence was held for England, by Sir John de Hastings and then by the Earl of Atholl. As Dr E. M. Barron has already suggested, its capture would have been an incident in Bruce's Aberdeenshire campaign of 1308, when all the places of strength garrisoned by English troops in these parts were recovered by the nationalists.[2] With such a conclusion the

[1] *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1306-1424, No. 329.

[2] *The Scottish War of Independence*, p. 331. By May 1309, we know that the only castle remaining to England in the north was Banff. See *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. p. 63: "*De victualibus*

chronology of the pottery thus far recovered in the excavations seems to stand in perfect harmony.

Assuming therefore, as the result of the above inquiry, that Coull Castle was captured and dismantled by Bruce, or on Bruce's behalf, in 1308, we have still to account for the earlier dismantling and restoration evident in the donjon. In the total absence of all authentic record, such a task is entirely a matter of conjecture, but I think it is possible to reconstruct the fortunes of the castle during the war in a way that accords both with such indirect historical evidence as we possess, and also with the indications furnished by the building itself.

We know that at the end of the thirteenth century Coull Castle was held by Isabella, Countess of Fife, who adhered to the English side; and that in 1299 she made it over to the English knight, Sir John de Hastings. Whether the grant was immediately effective we have no means of ascertaining; but the supposition at any rate is that before the grant was made, in the earlier stages of the war, during the risings under Balliol (1296) and Wallace (1297), the castle would be held in the English interest by a constable or warden appointed by the Countess. Now from the draft conditions for a truce concluded between the Scots and English on 30th October 1300, where the places at that time held for England are catalogued, we glean the fact that in Scotland north of the Forth only Perth, Dundee, and Banff still sheltered English garrisons.[1] It may therefore be inferred that in the campaigns of Wallace the castle had been recovered from its English or pro-English masters.

In 1303 Edward I. invaded the North of Scotland, marching *via* Perth, Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin to Kinloss and Lochindorb, which he made his headquarters for a number of weeks. The result of this campaign was to bring the whole of the north back into English obedience; and we know definitely that on 9th February 1304, when a truce was made between Edward and Comyn—who as guardian of Scotland had continued the resistance to England after Wallace's disaster at Falkirk—the only castle still holding out was Stirling, which surrendered after a heroic defence on 20th July following.[2] We may therefore conjecture that Coull Castle, *if habitable*, must have again

mittendis ad castra et villas in Scotia, quæ sunt in potestate Anglorum." *Cf.* Barbour, ed. Mackenzie, p. 156:—

> "The King than till his pes has tane
> The north cuntre, that humylly
> Obeysit till his senyhory.
> Swa that be north the Month war nane
> That thai ne war his men ilkane."

[1] Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol ii., No. 1164.
[2] Barron, *The Scottish War of Independence*, p. 191.

opened its gates to an English garrison at some time during this northern campaign of Edward in 1303.

But was the castle habitable? In this connection we have to consider a very interesting letter addressed by John, Earl of Athole, to Edward I. some time in 1304. It will be remembered that in July 1305 this nobleman was drawing the rents on Edward's behalf from the lands of Aboyne and Coull. In the letter now under review, he prays the king to reconsider his order to deliver the Castle of Aboyne to Sir Alexander Comyn, "for the land around it is savage and full of evil-doers, and *the king has no other fortress where the country or his servants may be in safety to keep the peace.*"[1] Here, then, we are definitely told that in 1304 Aboyne Castle was the only stronghold held for England in these parts. Now there is no evidence that the Peel of Aboyne was ever a stronghold of such consequence as the great stone castle at Coull; and it is impossible to conceive that if Coull Castle also had been garrisoned on Edward's behalf by the Earl of Athole at the time he wrote—a time, be it remembered, when *we know definitely that he was in effective occupation of the lands*—he would not have mentioned it along with Aboyne Castle in his letter. Indeed, if both these strongholds were at that time held by his garrisons, we should have expected him to mention Coull rather than Aboyne, bearing in view their respective importance. The only conclusion possible from a consideration of these facts seems to be that, though the Earl of Athole occupied and drew the rents from the demesne of Coull, the castle itself was not in fit condition to shelter a garrison.

Putting all this together, therefore, it would seem that, if Coull Castle had been (as is likely) recovered by Wallace or Wallace's supporters during the campaign of 1297, it must then have been rendered untenable, so that after Edward I. in 1303 restored English rule in the north, Aboyne and not Coull became the centre, under the Earl of Athole, of English jurisdiction in this neighbourhood. It is at least a plausible conjecture that the partial demolition of the donjon was the means adopted by Wallace's men to render the castle harmless, and that this destruction had not yet been repaired—perhaps owing to the land being "savage and full of evil-doers," as Athole complained—at the date in 1304 when he wrote his letter.

In October 1305 Edward issued his famous "Ordinance for the Settlement of the Kingdom of Scotland," and all the evidence we possess seems to show that from this date until Bruce's desperate bid for the Crown in the spring of next year, the northern districts of Scotland were firmly in the English monarch's grasp. At this time—when Edward and his subordinates believed that Scotland had been finally conquered and were

[1] Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. ii., No. 1633.

busy with plans for her permanent settlement—it is reasonable to expect that the damage done to the donjon of Coull Castle would be repaired (as we now see it), and that the castle, thus again made tenable, continued to hold an English garrison until finally captured and destroyed by the patriotic party in 1308.

Reasoning upon such slender and largely negative evidence must inevitably be attended with risks; and until the excavation of the court-yard is completed, and all the secrets revealed that Coull Castle may still have to tell, it is well that the above conclusions should be held merely as provisional. Meantime I can only claim that they constitute at least an intelligible reconstruction of the fortunes of this great stronghold—a reconstruction which agrees, as I have said already, at once with the internal evidence so far discoverable in its remains and associated relics, and with the historical probabilities. Further than this it is impossible at the present stage to go.

In concluding this paper, I wish to express my very warm thanks to Dr Marshall Mackenzie of Lochcoull for according me the great privilege of conducting the recent excavations, the entire cost of which he has borne. It is a pleasure also to record my appreciation of the enthusiastic energy with which the strenuous work of digging on so difficult a *terrain* was carried out by my party of Boy Scouts. The Rev. Alexander Mackenzie, minister of Coull, readily afforded facilities for them to camp on his ground. To Mr William Norrie, F.S.A.Scot., Aberdeen, who acted as Clerk of Works, I am greatly indebted, not merely for the admirable arrangements which he made for the excavations—arrangements in which his practical skill as an engineer proved invaluable—but also for his excellent series of photographs. I should also like to record my obligation to Mr William J. Adair Nelson and Mr James E. Smith, Aberdeen, who assisted me to make the survey of the ruins. Sheriff David J. Mackenzie, F.S.A.Scot., Elgin, kindly allowed me to make use of the very extensive collections which he has made in regard to the history of the Durwards. I am also obliged to several of my colleagues at the University of Aberdeen for their contributions on technical matters: to Mr Charles B. Bisset, M.A., B.Sc., for his geological particulars; to Mr George Newlands, M.A., B.Sc., for the chemical analyses; to Mr Robert M. Neill, M.A., M.C., for his report upon the bones; and to Mr Macgregor Skene, D.Sc., and Miss Dorothy C. Downie, B.Sc., B.Sc.(For.), for their reports upon the vegetable remains.