

II.

NOTE ON A ROMAN GLASS BOTTLE FROM THE PARISH OF
TURRIFF, ABOUT 1857. BY MRS DUFF DUNBAR, F.S.A.Scot.

I have in my possession the glass bottle shown in the accompanying photograph (fig. 1). It was found about 1857 by Mr Peter Garden, a descendant of the family of the celebrated centenarian of that name, whose remarkable record is in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*. He died in 1775 at an age estimated from 120 to 140 years.

Mr Peter Garden, the finder of the bottle, was a farmer and merchant who lived at Birkenhills, on the high road to Turriff, about two miles from Brackenbraes where he made his find. He was a keen antiquary and collector, but never sold his treasures.

Mr George Sim, naturalist, of Castle Street, Aberdeen, was with Peter Garden when he found the bottle in a sandy hillock, part of which had been cut away in laying the line of the Banff and Turriff Railway. The part of the line from Inveramsay to Turriff was made between 1855 and 1857, and this cutting is near Darra, where the line runs close to the high road. The bottle was at a spot halfway between the railway

line and the burn. I was in Mr Sim's antique shop on the 1st October 1903, and in the course of an interesting talk with him about Aberdeenshire antiquarian finds I chanced to mention Mr Peter Garden's glass bottle, when Mr Sim gave me some details about the discovery. He said that there were no bones nor ashes nor the remains of any urn, but with the



Fig. 1. Roman Glass Bottle found near Turriff, Aberdeenshire.

bottle was found "a large number of dark-brownish, wine-coloured glass beads about half an inch to four-fifths of an inch in diameter." Mr Sim spoke from memory, as he had none of the beads. They were, many of them, given away, he said, to anyone who asked, and I could not trace one of them, though I tried to do so. Mr James Beattie of Gordonstone, Auchterless, himself interested in antiquities, told me the day after my visit to Mr Sim that his mother had possessed a bead, which was thought to be amber, answering to my description, but it had disappeared. Mrs Beattie was living at Towie-Barclay about the time of the find, and she used to go to Peter Garden's shop at Birkenhills.

In 1911, when I was again making inquiries, Miss Garden, a niece of Peter Garden's, said that she remembered the bottle and the beads quite well, but she had none of the latter. Those that were left went in the sale. Peter Garden died at the age of 41, about 1868, and his collection, with other things, was sold by auction in a shed at his house some years after. I was then a girl in the early teens and was present with my governess at the sale. The bottle, which is of greenish glass and measures 9 inches in height, went beyond my limited means, as did two red beaker urns and an Andrea Ferrara sword, but an uncle at once bought the bottle from the purchaser for me, and I have had it ever since. I have given these details because a distinguished authority expressed incredulity at such a discovery in such a spot. The Roman temporary camp at Glenmailen under the shadow of the Hill of Culsalmond is, however, only about eight or nine miles away.