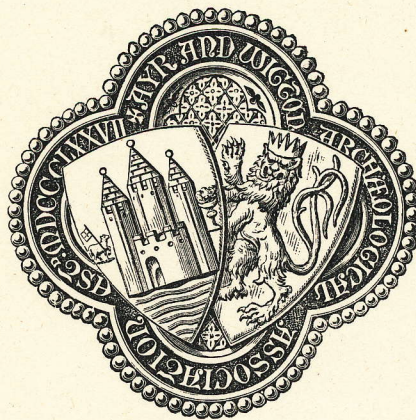


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AND  
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

RELATING TO THE COUNTIES OF

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V.

ILLUSTRATED NOTICES OF THE ANCIENT  
BRONZE IMPLEMENTS OF AYRSHIRE.

(FIRST SERIES.)

THE use of weapons and implements of bronze marks a later stage in the progress of a nation's civilization than that of stone; and is probably anterior to the use of those of iron, though on this point archaeologists are not quite unanimous. As was remarked in introducing the "Notices" of the stone implements,<sup>1</sup> there is no reason for supposing that, in Scotland at least, the time when the one material was laid aside and the other adopted was a fixed period in its history. On the contrary, though the succession of a stone, a bronze, and an iron period over the whole of Western Europe is almost beyond dispute, they largely overlap each other. There is another consideration that ought to be kept in view in studying the antiquities of a district like ours as materials for history. Such districts were often the scene of conflicts between the possessors of the soil, and invading tribes who obtained no permanent footing. The combatants may have been armed in a very different manner; and victor and vanquished would often, no doubt, be buried by their surviving comrades, at no great distance from one another, with their most valued weapons and ornaments laid by their sides. This remark of course applies only to such relics as had been used for the purposes of war, not necessarily the larger number.

In these "Notices," the nomenclature and classification adopted by Mr. Evans in his companion volume to the *Stone Implements of Great Britain* will be employed,<sup>2</sup> and to the same source all wishing for detailed information regarding such relics are referred.

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. III. page 67.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, London, 1881.



Evans describes bronze implements under the following headings :—

Flat and flanged celts ; winged celts and palstaves ; socketed celts.

Chisels, gouges, hammers, and other tools.

Sickles, knives, razors, etc.

Daggers or spear-heads, halberds, and maces.

Leaf-shaped swords and scabbards ; spear-heads, lance-heads, etc.

Shields, bucklers, and helmets ; trumpets and bells.

Pins, torques, bracelets, rings, and other personal ornaments.

Clasps, buttons, buckles, etc.

Vessels, caldrons, etc.

The number of Ayrshire bronzes belonging to this list, which are known to be now in existence, is not numerous ; and some of the more important, such as the Beith Bronze Buckler<sup>1</sup> and the Caprington Horn,<sup>2</sup> have already been described in the " Collections."

*Bog Farm Celt.*—Of all bronze implements the celt or hatchet is best

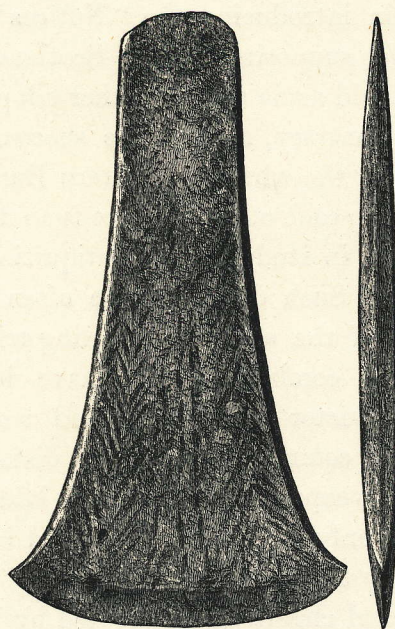


FIG. 1.—Bog Farm. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

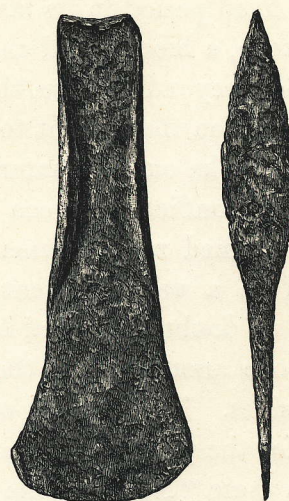


FIG. 2.—Largs. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

known, the flat variety being perhaps the simplest as well as the earliest form. Fig. 1 represents a celt of this type. It was found about fifty

<sup>1</sup> See *Collections*, Vol. I. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.



years ago, 3 feet below the surface of the ground, in a field on Bog Farm, near Kilwinning, of which the late Mr. James Allan was then tenant. Latterly, it has been in possession of his nephew, Mr. Hugh Ramsay, Kilwinning. It measures  $6\frac{3}{8}$  inches long, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches broad at the edge.

Although the pattern is somewhat obscure, there are distinct traces of ornamentation on the surface of this celt, which, not only in this respect, but also in its shape, bears a decided resemblance to one from Ireland figured by Evans; the sides of both being hammered so as to produce a central ridge between them. The markings are supposed, by the same authority, to have been produced by some blunt instrument. I am indebted for a loan of the Bog Farm celt to the Rev. William Pinkerton, Kilwinning.

*Largs Winged Celt.*—The example next figured (Fig. 2) was found at Largs, and is in the National Museum at Edinburgh, to which it was presented, in 1787, by "John Erskine of Alva." It is 5 inches long by  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inch across the face.

In Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, after a brief reference to the famous battle of Largs, we read:—"An unhewn stone of granite, 10 feet long, once stood on end in that field, erected over the body of a chieftain. It is now fallen down. A Danish axe was found not far from it, and sent by Mr. Brisbane of Brisbane to the Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh. The Earl of Glasgow had another."<sup>1</sup> As there is only one Largs celt in the Edinburgh Museum, so far as is known, the "axe" referred to in this extract may possibly, notwithstanding the discrepancy in the names of the donors, be identical with the one now under notice. This example belongs to the subdivision usually known as winged, in consequence of the margin, or part of it, being developed into flanges, for the purpose, it would seem, of being attached to a wooden handle or haft. In this variety the flanges do not extend to the lower part of the blade, and there is not, as in the majority of examples, what has been called a stop-ridge.

*West Glenbuck Palstave.*—In March 1882, a winged celt of the palstave form was found on the farm of West Glenbuck, Muirkirk. It is 6 inches long and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches broad at the edge, and belongs apparently to that variety in which the flanges have been hammered over the blade so as to retain it firmly, as in a socket. It has hardly what may be regarded as a

<sup>1</sup> The [Old] *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 364. *Ibid.* vol. xvii. p. 516.



stop-ridge; but the surface between the flanges is slightly hollowed, so as to form a well-marked socket. It may thus be a connecting link between the two varieties of palstave. This celt (Fig. 3) was turned up by the plough while Mr. William Gibson, Muirkirk, who, happening to pass when the ploughmen were at work, casually took the place of one of them. Mr. Gibson subsequently handed it over to Robert Millar, Esq., Alloway Cottage, who has kindly furnished me with these particulars.

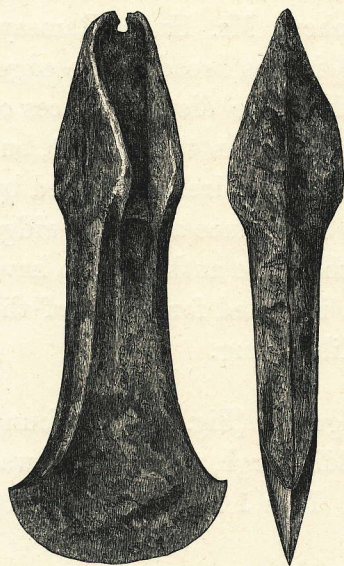


FIG. 3.—West Glenbuck. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

*Dalduff Socketed Celts.*—In the year 1846, some workmen, none of whom are now alive, while engaged in draining a field on the farm of Dalduff, near Crosshill, came upon an old “Pot,” at a depth of about 3 feet from the surface. It had no lid or cover, but the fragments of two swords were placed over its mouth. It turned out that the



FIG. 4.—Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .



FIG. 5.—Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .  
Dalduff, Crosshill.



FIG. 6.—Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

“Pot” contained a small hoard of bronze relics. Mr. John Gibson, Ladyburn, who has been at considerable trouble to gather such facts regarding the discovery as can now be obtained, writes :—“The men, it appears, were



under the impression that they had discovered a treasure, and after solemnly agreeing to keep the matter a profound secret, forthwith adjourned to the village inn to celebrate their good fortune. It could hardly be expected that, under these circumstances, the secret would keep; and, accordingly, I learn that before the convivial meeting broke up, not only had the news of the 'find' been widely proclaimed, but the relics themselves, consisting apparently of bronze celts, had been so divided as to be henceforth completely scattered. Some time afterwards information of the discovery reached the proprietor, Sir Charles Dalrymple Ferguson, Bart., of Kilkerran, who immediately requested Dr. Blair, the medical practitioner in the village, to collect the scattered relics. In this Dr. Blair was considered at the time to have been pretty successful, but there is now reason to believe that many of the articles were never restored." Sir Charles presented the three celts here figured (Figs. 4, 5, and 6), with two portions of swords, to the National Museum in Edinburgh. The celts belong to the class that have a socket for receiving the haft. "In this form of instrument," remarks Mr. Evans, "the haft was actually embedded in the blade; whereas in the case of the flat and flanged celts, and of the so-called palstaves, the blade was imbedded in the handle." Another characteristic of them is, that they are generally furnished with a loop at one side. Two of these Dalduff celts are almost without the usual moulding or beading round the mouth, but the third has a distinctly marked moulding, pierced by two small apertures. They measure  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inch by  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch;  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inch by 2 inch; and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inch by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch respectively.

It is to be hoped that some of the other bronzes in this "find" may be made available for description at a future time, if they present any point of interest. Dalduff House seems to have been a place of considerable importance in ancient days.

*Maybole Socketed Celt.*—In Fig. 7 is shown a socketed celt, with the vertical lines or ribs raised on its faces for some distance down from the mouth, a class not uncommon elsewhere. It is the property of William



FIG. 7.—Near Maybole. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .



M'Ilwraith, Esq., formerly of Ayr and Dumfries, and now of Rockhampton, Queensland. Of its discovery nothing is known, except that it was found near Maybole. It measures  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inch by  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch.

*Kirkoswald Rapier Sword.*—In the proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, there is figured a bronze rapier sword, with the

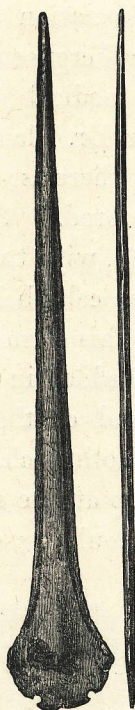


FIG. 8.—Kirkoswald. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

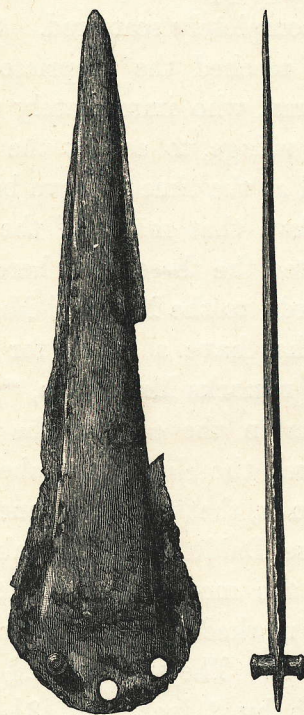


FIG. 9.—Near Crossraguel Abbey. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

following note on it by R. W. Cochran-Patrick, Esq., M.P., etc.: "This was discovered many years ago in a peat moss, in the parish of Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, and is now the property of Colonel M'Lachlan of Blair."<sup>1</sup> Its length is 15 inches, and its breadth across the handle plate,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch. The Council of the Society has obligingly granted the use of the woodcut (Fig. 8).

*Crossraguel Dagger-blade or Halberd.*—In Fig. 9 is represented, drawn to the scale of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its real size, a broad dagger-blade or halberd,  $14\frac{3}{4}$  inches long by 4 inches broad at its widest part. There are three rivet-holes at

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, New Series, vol. ii. p. 96.



the base, with a rivet remaining in one of them. A portion of the metal on one of the sides is broken off. The midrib is very broad, occupying nearly the whole breadth of the blade. It was found near Crossraguel Abbey, and was presented to the National Museum in Edinburgh by the Rev. James Inglis, Kirkoswald.

*Whitehaugh Spear-head.*—The instrument next to be noticed (Fig. 10) is a tanged dagger or spear-head. A few examples of the same type were found in the middle of last century at Arreton Down, in the Isle of Wight; and one or two, more recently, in the south of England; but the form is far from common. This Ayrshire specimen was discovered some years ago by a labourer, named John Russell, who came upon it while working at Whitehaugh Moss, nearly 4 miles north-west of the village of Muirkirk. It was observed projecting outwards from the side of a drain about 6 feet deep; and the finder was led to notice it by the brightness of its colour. Having brought it home he offered to sell it for a trifle to Mr. Alexander Donald, Parochial Schoolmaster of Muirkirk, who recommended him either to give it to some friend or send it to a museum. It now belongs to Mr. Samuel Taylor, Holmhead, Muirkirk.

This beautiful weapon, a spear-head in all probability, is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inch in length by 2 inch at its greatest breadth. It has a rounded midrib, which rises in the centre to an angle or ridge, with several parallel grooves or flutings on either side of it. These pass into one another and disappear into the main rib as it approaches the point. The hole at the end of the tang was no doubt intended for a rivet or pin.

I have to thank Mr. Donald for procuring for me the loan of this spear-head, as well as for the particulars of its discovery.

*Lindston Loch and Carleith Ewers.*—Fig. 11 represents one of the



FIG. 10.—Whitehaugh Moss.  
Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .



three-legged pots or ewers, of common occurrence in Scotland. It was found, nearly a century ago, in a drained part of Lindston Loch, Dalrymple. These vessels are usually of brass, not bronze; and though they were long popularly believed to be of Roman manufacture, are now known to be of late medieval origin. This ewer has been for many years in the Manse of Dalrymple. It is  $9\frac{5}{8}$  inch high and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inch across the mouth.

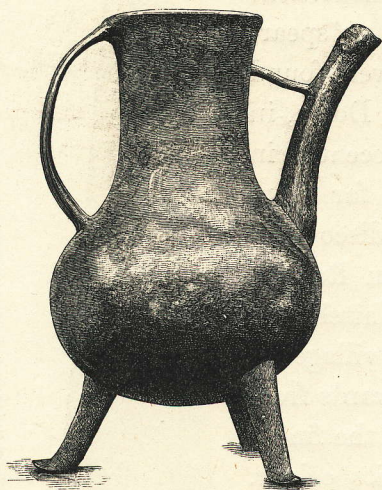


FIG. 11.—Lindston Loch. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

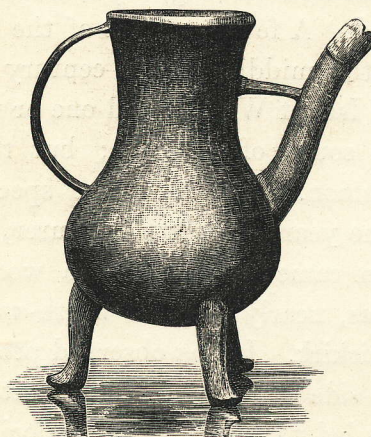


FIG. 12.—Carleith. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Another ewer, almost identical in form and size, is in the collection of the late Dr. C. F. Sloan, Ayr. It was got at Skeldon. A third is in the wreck of the museum that once belonged to the Mechanics' Institution, Ayr. Among the Ayrshire Antiquities preserved at Lanfine, and figured in Vol. I. of the "Collections,"<sup>1</sup> a fourth example (Fig. 12) is represented, which was found at Carleith, four miles from Lanfine.

JAMES MACDONALD.

GLASGOW, *March* 1884.

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. I. p. 64.