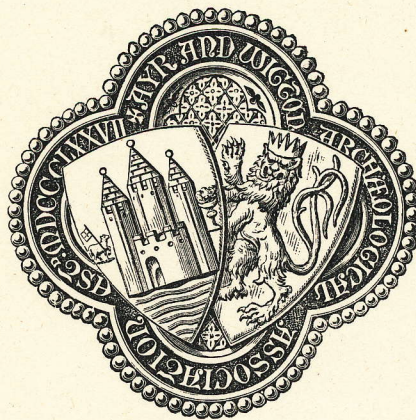


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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF FIVE BRONZE CELTS AND A BRONZE RING AT THE "MAIDENS," near Culzean Castle, Ayrshire. By R. Munro, M.D., M.A., F.S.A. Scot.	1
II. AYRSHIRE CRANNOGS (Third Notice). Additional Discoveries on the Crannog in Lochspouts. By R. Munro, M.D., M.A., F.S.A. Scot.	9
III. MILITARY REPORT ON THE DISTRICTS OF CARRICK, KYLE, AND CUNNINGHAM. By R. B. Armstrong, Author of the "History of Liddesdale"	17
IV. THE CHURCH OF DUNLOP. By John Shedden-Dobie, F.S.A. Scot.	26
V. ILLUSTRATED NOTICES OF THE ANCIENT BRONZE IMPLEMENTS OF AYRSHIRE (First Series). By James Macdonald, LL.D., M.A., F.S.A. Scot.	47
VI. THE LOGAN CHARTER. By Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, Bart., of Monreith, M.P.	55
VII. THE HERALDRY OF WIGTONSHIRE (No. V.) By Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, Bart., of Monreith, M.P.	58
VIII. ANCIENT PLATES BELONGING TO THE KIRK-SESSION OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF KILMARNOCK. By the Rev. W. Forbes Low, B.D.	59
IX. CORSHILL BARON-COURT BOOK. By John Shedden-Dobie, F.S.A. Scot.	65
INDEX	251

VIII.

ANCIENT PLATES BELONGING TO
THE KIRK-SESSION OF THE PARISH CHURCH
OF KILMARNOCK.

FIG. 1.—Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.



FIG. 2.—Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.



FIG. 3.—Scale 4.

OLD PLATES BELONGING TO THE CHURCH OF KILMARNOCK.

THE three engravings represent as many old plates belonging to the Parish Church of Kilmarnock. Nothing can be found regarding them in the Kirk-Session records. To judge from their exterior, they seem to belong to three different periods:—

- No. I. appears to be the oldest;
- No. II. more recent and less rusty;
- No. III. to belong to a still later date.

Originally they are thought to have been used in Kilmarnock for the purpose of carrying the Bread at the Communion, though latterly they were retained as offertory plates outside the church-door, which accounts for the holes drilled through them to allow the rain-water to escape. In the two older ones, and particularly the oldest, long service and exposure to the weather have defaced much of the workmanship, which is very fine; but despite the weight and friction of the collections, some of the beaten work, particularly the face of a cherub, remains wonderfully preserved. At the request of Mr. Cochran-Patrick, M.P., they were sent for inspection to the British Museum; and the following information has been kindly furnished by Mr. A. W. Franks. He says:—

“There is no doubt about the reading on one of them (No. III.), as far as the letters are concerned, viz. repetitions of

EH WART DERIN FRIDG:

the break in the stamp always comes after the G, which, I presume, is the initial of Gottes. ‘The Peace of God remains therein,’ or something of the kind. It is low German, a dialect little studied in this country. . . . I have on my chimney-piece two with the same inscriptions, subject—St. George and the Dragon; one I bought in this country, and the other

was sent to me from Asia Minor. A great number of these dishes are to be found in Italy, where they are used to hold fritters in the streets on St. Joseph's Day.

"I can make nothing of the inscription on the other dish from the engraving. Other common inscriptions are repetitions of

EH BART AL ZEIT GELUEK.

or,

GI SEAL REKORDEN.

"Some very fantastic letters have been lately read—M LVTHER. *Not* the Reformer, but probably a brassfounder. Another is—

RATHE WIS RN BI.

"It is quite a relief to come to the inscription on one of my dishes—'Gott sei mit uns.' There is a learned lucubration in Kruse, *Deutsch Alterthümer oder Archiv*, vol. i. pt. 4, p. 56 (Halle, 1824): '*Ueber einige Merkwürdige Taufbecken-Inschriften*,' with plates, and I think I have seen them noticed in other German publications. I see another in Büsching, *Der Deutschen Leben*; and in *Mittelalter*, 2d vol. p. 65, Breslau, 1819.

"The dishes are evidently German. Their date the end of the fifteenth century, though the use of the same stamps may have been continued a little later. As to date, you can refer to one which I exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries of London, Feb. 5, 1874,¹ and which I have since given to the British Museum,—date 1487. They are commonly called in Germany 'Taufbecken,' or baptismal basins. They have also been considered alms-dishes, or to be used in washing the hands of the priests. The inscriptions are in Low German, though it is not easy to see what they mean."

It is not known how long they were used as offertory plates in Kilmarnock; they were replaced by others in 1870.

W. FORBES LOW, B.D.

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, second series, vi. p. 119.