

## WILSON'S SCOTTISH ARCHÆOLOGY.\*

ANTIQUARIANISM and archæology mean the same thing, but an antiquarian and an archæologist should not be confounded together as meaning two men of similar pursuits. The difference between them lies in this, that the antiquarian, as hitherto popularly understood in this country, took up a segment of the circle, whilst the archæologist takes up the whole circumference of the circle. The antiquarian regarded relics as of importance when invested with personal associations; the archæologist prizes relics when belonging to a remote and unknown period. Thus the antiquarian would hold in highest veneration the sword that beheaded Mary Queen of Scots, and his visitors would probably do the same; whilst a flint axe found in Lochar Moss might lie on a shelf unheeded both by him or his friends. But this flint, although it might only have been the instrument in the hands of a petty chief for decapitating a miserable serf, would be invested with great importance in the estimation of the archæologist, because it belonged to that primitive aboriginal period in the history of our country when as yet bronze and iron manufactures were unknown, literature undeveloped, and, mayhap, ere ever Greece and Rome had commenced their conquests.

History is of two kinds, unwritten and written. The geologist compiles the first chapter of the world's annals by interrogating Nature as to her works during the period commencing with the Creation and ending with the Deluge; the archæologist takes up the second chapter, and interrogating Nature as to the works of man from the Deluge down to the period of a nation's written literature. Hence the naturalist stands in much the same relation to geology that the antiquarian does to archæology: the naturalist busies himself with existing natural phenomena, but geology deals not only with the living but the extinct; the antiquarian preserves determinate specimens of mediæval and subsequent eras, while the archæologist embraces modern, ancient, and what we have been accustomed to call the benighted and barbarous epochs. The limited view of antiquarianism has generally been the one most popularly prevalent. Thus, when Burns speaks of Captain Grose's peregrinations, he says:—

“He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets,  
Rusty airn caps, and jinglin' jackets,  
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets  
A towmout guid,  
And parritch pats, and auld sant buckets,  
Afore the Flood.

“Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder,  
Auld Tubal Cain's fire shool and fender,  
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O' Balaam's ass;  
A broom-stick o' the Witch o' Endor,  
Weel shod wi' brass.

“Forbye, he'll shap: you aff f.' g'leg  
The cut o' Adam's philibeg; ;

The knife that nicket Abel's craig  
He'll prove you fully;  
It was a faulding jock-the-leg,  
Or lang-kail gully.”

It is evident that, apart from personal associations, Burns had no correct idea where the researches of his “fat friend” should commence as to time, or, if commenced, what kind of objects should have been sought for. Even Scott does not make Jonathan Oldbuck much more enlightened. When Lovel is introduced into the *sanctum sanctorum* at Monkbarns, he sees “maps, engravings, scraps of parchment, bundles of papers, pieces of old armour, swords, dirks, helmets, and Highland targets; Roman lamps and pateræ;” the “Bannockburn calthrops, which damaged the nether man of the Rev. Dr. Heavysterne, from the Low Countries;” the “club, iron-shod,” which Jonathan supposed to have been used by monkish vassals; and, last of all, in order not to be tedious, the “thumb-screws, which had given the Covenanters of former days the cramp in their joints.” Except the “Roman lamps and pateræ,” the collection would have been more in the way of Captain Grose than Mr. Wilson. Our readers will now, we trust, see the best method of disposing of their “nick-nackets.” If they ever should excavate the tooth of a megatherium, let them send it to a geologist, who will prize it more than the jaw-bone of Demosthenes; if an aboriginal skull, let it be given to the archæologist, who will be puzzled if he should give it or the cranium of Shakspeare the higher place in his collection; if the article be a pair of snuffers from the veritable household of Queen Elizabeth, give them, by all means, to the antiquary, who will assign to them a holier place in his affections than if he had received a cist which whilom had been fashioned before the foundations of the Pyramids had been laid, or their builders beheld the light of the sun.

We have spoken of history. One of the signs of the times is an increasing indifference to the authority of what are called general historians. Lord Campbell laughs at the juridical knowledge of Hume; every biographer complains of the manner in which his hero is treated by national chroniclers; and now we have Mr. Wilson administering a fillip to his brethren of the pen-and-ink school.

“The oldest intelligible inscription known in Scotland is that graven in Anglo-Saxon runes on the Ruthwell Cross, Dumfriesshire, and dating not earlier than the ninth century. The oldest written historic documents are probably the charters of Duncan, engrossed about the year 1035, and still preserved among the muniments of Durham Cathedral. Prior to these the Romans furnish some few scanty notes concerning the barbarian Picti. The Irish annalists contribute brief but valuable additions. The northern sagas, it is now certain, con-

tain a still richer store of early historic notes, which the antiquaries of Copenhagen are busily digesting for us into available materials. Yet, after all these are ransacked, what shall we make of the long era which intervenes between the dispersion of the human family and the peopling of the British Isles? When did the first rude prow touch our shores?—who were its daring crew? Whence did language, manners, nationality, civilisation, and letters spring? All these are questions of the deepest interest; but on nearly all of them history is as silent as on the annals of chaos. With reverential piety, or with restless inquisitiveness, we seek to know somewhat of the rude forefathers of our island race. Nor need we despair of unveiling somewhat of the mystery of their remote era, though no undeciphered hieroglyphics, nor written materials, preserve one solitary record of the *Mæzes* of the British Isles.

“Human intelligence and research have already accomplished so much, that ignorance alone can presume to resign any past event to utter oblivion. Between ‘*the Beginning*’ spoken of in the first verse of the Book called Genesis, and the creation of man, the most humble and devout of Biblical students now acknowledge the intervention of ages, compared to which the whole era of our race is but as the progression of the shadow one degree on the dial of time. Our whole written materials concerning all these ages are comprehended in the few introductory words of the Mosaic narrative, and for well-nigh 6000 years no more was known. But all the while their history lay in legible characters around these generations, who heeded them not, or read them wrong. At length this history is being deciphered. The geologist has mastered the characters, and page after page of the old interleaved annals of pre-adamite existence are being reduced to our *enchorial text*—to the writing of the people. The dislocated strata are being paged, as it were, and re-arranged in their primary order. The palimpsests are being noted, and their double readings transferred to their correct places in the revised history. The whole accumulations of these ages between chaos and man are, in fact, being dealt with by modern science much in the same way as the bibliographer treats some monkish or collegiate library suddenly rescued from the dust and confusion of centuries.”—Pp. 3, 4.

“The infancy of all written history is necessarily involved in fable. Long ere the scattered families have conjoined their patriarchal unions into tribes and clans, acknowledging some common chief, and submitting their differences to the rude legislation of the arch-priest or civil head of the commonwealth, treacherous tradition has converted the story of their birth into the wildest admixture of myth and legendary fable. To unravel the complicated skein, and recover the pure thread divested of all its extraneous acquisitions, is the impossible task of the historian. This period past—so momentous in the influence it exercises on all the years that follow—the historian finds himself among materials more manageable in some respects, though not always more trustworthy. He reaches the era of chronicles, records, and, still better, of

diplomas, charters, deeds of gift, and the like honest documents, which, being written with no thought of posterity by their compilers, are the only really trustworthy chronicles that posterity has inherited. The historic epoch of Scotland is involved in even more obscurity than that which clouds the dim and fabulous morning of most nations. We have, indeed, the few but invaluable allusions of Roman authors supplying important and generally trustworthy data. But it is only a momentary glimpse of sunshine. For the era succeeding we have little better than the perplexing admixture of traditions, facts, and pious legends of monkish chroniclers, furnished with a copiousness sufficiently characteristic of the contrast between the literary legionary of imperial Rome, and the cloistered soldier of her papal successor. Amid these dusty acres of parchment must we glean for older dynasties and monarchical pedigrees—not seldom tempted to abandon the weedy furrows in disgust or despair. It is with no lack of zeal or courage, however, that these soldiers of the Church have encountered the oblivious past into which we still peer with no less resolute inquisitiveness. Bede, Fordun, Wyntoun, Boece, and the other penmen of the cloisters who, more or less accurately, chronicled contemporary history, all contributed their quota to the thick mists of fable which obscure the earlier annals of the country. Wyntoun, the best of our Scottish chroniclers, following the example of other monkish historians, begins his work as near *the beginning* as may be, with a treatise on angels, before proceeding to ‘*manny’s fyrst creatourne!*’ In the sixth chapter he gets the length of ‘*Ye Arke of Noe, and of the Spate,*’ and after treating of *Ynde, Egyppe, Afryk,* and many other lands with an enviable and leisurely composure, he at length reaches the threshold of his legitimate subject, and glances in the thirteenth chapter of his *Scottish Chronicles*, at ‘*how Bretanne and Irlande lysis.*’ This, however, is a mere passing notice; nor is it till after the dedication of many more successive chapters of his first five books to the general history of the world, that the author of the ‘*Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*’ quits his ample theme, and devotes himself exclusively to the professed object of his investigation, with only such occasional deviations as might be expected from an ecclesiastical historian.

“With such laborious chroniclers peering into the past, which lay fully five centuries nearer them than it does to us, there might seem little left for the men of this older generation to do. But unhappily, the very best of monkish chroniclers must be consulted with caution even as contemporary historians, and scarcely at all as the recorders of what passed any length of time prior to their own day; their information being nearly as trustworthy in regard to Noah and his *spate*, as to the traditions of generations immediately preceding their own. Lord Hailes begins his annals with the accession of Malcolm Canmore, ‘because the history of Scotland previous to that period is involved in obscurity and fable.’ Tytler, with even less courage than Lord Hailes, commences

only at the accession of Alexander the Third, 'because it is at this period that our national annals become particularly interesting to the general reader.'

"Till recently, the never-failing apology for all obscurities and deficiencies in Scottish history has been the rape of our muniments by Edward and Cromwell. The former spoliation supplied for some centuries an excuse for all degrees of ignorance, inconsistencies, or palpable blunders; and the latter came most inconveniently to hand for more recent dalliers in the same pleasant field of historic rambling. Edward and Cromwell both contributed a helping hand to the obscurity of Scottish history, in so far as they carried off and destroyed national records which could ill be spared. The apology, however, has been worth far more to maundering manufacturers of history than the lost muniments were ever likely to have proved. Not a few of these irrecoverable national records, so long deplored, it begins to be shrewdly suspected never had any existence. Many more of them, it is found, were not sought for, or they might have been discovered to have never left their old repositories. Diligent Scottish antiquaries, finding this hereditary wail over lost muniments a very profitless task, have of late years betaken themselves to the study of what remained, and have been rewarded by the recovery of chest-loads of dusty charters and deeds of all sorts, of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, containing mines of historic information. The Scottish chartularies, now printed by various clubs of literary antiquaries, disclose to us information scarcely open to a doubt, concerning old laws, feudal customs, servitude, tenure of property, ecclesiastical corporate rights, the collision of lay and clerical interests, and the final transference of monastic lands to lay proprietors. The old apology, therefore, of muniments lost or destroyed, will no longer serve the Scottish historian. Imperfectly as these treasures have yet been turned to account, mediæval history is no longer obscure. Many fallacies are already exploded, and many more must speedily follow. The legends of the old chroniclers must be tried by the tests of documents written sometimes by the same authors, but with no thought that history would ever question them for the truth.

"Yet ample as is the field thus open to the literary antiquary, these will only partially satisfy earnest longings after a knowledge of the past, and a clue to the old ancestral chain whereof they are but the middle links. Ritson has already carried back the supposed limits of authentic Caledonian history fully a thousand years before the *obscurity* that daunted Lord Hailes. Chalmers, Gregory, Skene, and other zealous investigators, have followed or emulated him in the same bold inquiry. But neither do they reach the BEGINNING which we still desiderate. Much obscurity, indeed, vanishes. We begin to discover that the northern and southern Picts, so long the subject of mystery and fable, were no other than the aboriginal Celtæ; while the Scots who founded the kingdom of Dalriada, in Argyleshire, and ultimately conferred their name

on the whole races occupying ancient Caledonia, were probably, if not indeed certainly, only another branch of the same Celtic race, who so readily amalgamated with the older occupants of Caledonia. That the change which is known as the 'Scottish Conquest' long puzzled the historian, from the absence of any defined traces of a progress at all commensurate with its results. This is somewhat gained on the mediæval *beginning* which could alone be previously held tenable. But this also begins in the wake of much progression, and glances at a period which likewise had its old history full of no less interest to us, could its annals be recovered."—Pp. 13—15.

Reversing the order of modern historians, who, floating down the stream of tradition, will not commence their narrative till they can touch the *terra-firma* of written documents, Mr. Wilson remarks, in another part of his work (p. 145), "that the more minutely we investigate the primitive Scottish era, the further it recedes into the past, and approaches to the period of the first dispersion of the human family amid the strange confusion of tongues; if not, indeed, to that still earlier time when the sons of Javan were born after the flood, and by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands—thus leading our thoughts, as Sir Thomas Browne quaintly but devoutly expresses it, 'unto old things and considerations of times before us, when even living men were antiquities, when the living might exceed the dead, and to depart this world could not be properly said, *abiit ad plures*, to go unto the greater number; and to run up our thoughts upon the *Ancient of Days*, the antiquary's truest object, unto whom the eldest parcels are young, and earth itself an infant."

Mr. Wilson, following the usual classification, divides the early portion of his subject into the stone, bronze, and iron periods: and we shall accompany him in a few of his walks in these old fields. And first as to the primitive stone period.

"The substitution of flint, stone, horn, and wood, in the absence of metal weapons and implements, must be abundantly familiar to all, in the customs of society when met with in a rude and primitive condition. The Fins and Esquimaux, the African Bushmen, and the natives of such of the Polynesian Islands as are rarely visited by Europeans, still construct knives and arrow-heads of flint or fish-bones, and supply themselves with wooden clubs and stone adzes and hammers, with little consciousness of imperfection or deficiency in such appliances. Examples of such a state of arts and human skill might be multiplied from the most dissimilar sources. It seems, as has been already remarked, to be a stage through which all nations have passed, not without each developing a sufficient individuality to render their arts well worthy of investigation by their descendants.

"In this state were the Scottish, and indeed the whole British aborigines, at an era much more remote than chronologists have been willing to assign for the occupation of the island by a human population, and for a period the duration of which we are also able in some degree to test.

"There is one certain point in this inquiry into primitive arts which the British antiquary possesses over all others, and from whence he can start without fear of error, though I am not aware that its importance in this view has heretofore been noted. From our insular position it is unquestionable that the first colonist of the British isles must have been able to construct some kind of boat, and have possessed sufficient knowledge of navigation to steer his course through the open sea."

Accordingly, many boats have been discovered; and here is a description of one of them:—

"Five fathoms deep in the carse of Falkirk, a complete boat was discovered, not far from the town, and therefore remote from any navigable water. Sir John Clerk, a Scottish antiquary of the last century, describes with great minuteness another vessel found in the same locality, remarkable for its size and construction, and which he pronounces, from the series of superincumbent strata, to have been an *antediluvian boat*! In May, 1726, a sudden rise of the river Carron undermined a portion of its banks, and exposed to view the side of this ancient boat lying imbedded in the alluvial soil, at a depth of fifteen feet from the surface, and covered by successive strata of clay, shells, moss, sand, and gravel. The proprietor immediately ordered it to be dug out. It proved to be a canoe of primitive form, but of larger dimensions than any other discovered to the north of the Tweed. It measured thirty-six feet long by four feet in extreme breadth, and was finely polished and perfectly smooth both inside and outside, formed from a single oak-tree, with the usual pointed stem and square stern."—P. 32.

But more curious than the boat of Sir John are those of the city of St. Mungo, that famous *sanct*. Among others, "a canoe was brought to light at a high level, far removed from the modern river's bed. Close to the site of Glasgow's ancient City Cross, and immediately adjoining what was once the Tolbooth of the burgh—more memorable from the fancied associations with which genius has endowed it ['Rob Roy'] than for the stern realities of human misery which were its true attributes—there stands a quaint but not inelegant building, adorned with an arcade curiously decorated with grim or grotesque masks on the key-stone of each arch. It was erected on the site of older and less substantial tenements, in the year 1781; and in digging for a foundation for it, in a stratum of laminated clay that lies beneath a thick bed of sand, a primitive British canoe was discovered, hollowed, as usual, out of a single trunk of oak. Another is noted to have been found about 1824, in Stockwell, near Jackson-street, while cutting the common sewer; and a fourth, at a much higher level, on the slope of Drygate-street, immediately behind the prison. In 1825, a fifth canoe was discovered, scarcely a hundred yards from the site of the former at the City Cross, when digging the sewer of London-street—a new thoroughfare opened up by the demolition of ancient buildings long fallen to decay. This boat, which measured about eighteen feet in length, exhibited unusual evidences of labour and ingenuity. It was

built of several pieces of oak, though without ribs. It lay, moreover, in a singular position, nearly vertical, and with its prow uppermost, as if it had foundered in a storm.

"Other discoveries were made in the autumn of 1847; and the citizens of Glasgow having for the most part a reasonable conviction that boats lose their value in proportion to their age, the one of the venerable relics lay for some months unheeded, until at length the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland made application for it to the Trustees of the River Clyde; and the rude precursor of the fleets that now crowd the noble river is safely deposited in their museum."—P. 35.

Along with some of these boats the remains of elephants and whales were excavated, affording other proofs of the derangements of land and water that have taken place since these remote epochs; but, without dwelling on such topics, we shall quote Mr. Wilson's conclusion to his chapter on "Aboriginal Traces." It is a fair specimen of the graceful episodes which mark his departure from the purely descriptive portions of his interesting volume. The remains of this period "point to a time within the historic era, when the ocean tides ebbed and flowed over the carse of Stirling, at a depth sufficient to admit of the gambols of the whale, where now a child might ford the brawling stream; and when the broad estuary of the Clyde flung its waves to the shore, not far from the high ground where the first cathedral of St. Mungo was founded, A. D., 560. These evidences of population, prior to the latest geological changes which have affected the surface of the country, are indeed all found on old historic ground, according to the reckonings of written chronicles. The first of them, in the south country, have been met with in localities where the traces of Roman invasion in the second century remain uneffaced. The carse of Falkirk is still indented with the vallum of the Antonine wall. Its modern church preserves the old tablet, which assigned to the ancient structure on its site a date coeval with the founding of Scottish monarchy under Malcolm Canmore; and the broad level ground which has disclosed evidence of such remarkable changes, alike in natural features and in national arts and manners, was the battle-field of Wallace in the thirteenth century, as of Prince Charles Edward and the Highland clansmen in the eighteenth century. Nor are the historic associations of the broad carse which the Forth has intertwined with its silver links a whit behind those of the vale of Carron. There, in all probability, Agricola marshalled the Roman legions for his sixth campaign, and watched the mustering of the army of Galgacus on the heights beyond. The ever-memorable field of Bannockburn adds a sacred interest to the same soil. There, too, are the scenes of James III.'s mysterious death on the field of Stirling, and of successive operations of Montrose, Cromwell, Mar, and Prince Charles. But the oldest of these events, long regarded as the beginnings of history, are modern occurrences, when placed alongside of such as we now refer to. Guiding his team across the 'bloody field,' as the scene of English slaughter is still termed, the

ploughman turns up the craw-foot, the small Scottish horse-shoe, and the like tokens of the memorable day when Edward's chivalry was foiled by the Scottish host. Penetrating some few feet lower with his spade, he finds the evidences of former changes in the level of land and sea, but with them stumbles also on the relics of coeval population. Lower down he will reach the stratified rocks, including the carboniferous formation, stored no less abundantly with relics of former life and change, but no longer within the historic period, or pertaining to the legitimate investigations of archæological science, unless in so far as they confirm its previous inductions, and prove the slow but well-defined progress of the more recent geological changes on the earth's surface. Such reflections are not suggested for the first time in our own day, nor will a shallow part satisfy those who have gone thus far. 'Nature hath furnished one part of the earth, and man another. The treasures of time lie high, in urns, coins, and monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endless rarities, and shows of all varieties, which reveal old things in heaven, make new discoveries in earth, and even earth itself a discovery. That great antiquity, America, lay buried for thousands of years, and a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us.'—P. 39.

Under the head of "Sepulchral Memorials" Mr. Wilson gives us a classification of barrows, which reminds us of certain jests regarding the late Secretary of the Admiralty, who was remarkable for tenacity of office during many administrations, some calling him truckle-Barrow, others wheel-Barrow, &c. But, in copiousness of species, the stone period fairly distances the wits who persecuted the maritime knight. It had, "1, the long barrow, resembling a gigantic grave; 2, The bowl barrow, from its similarity to an inverted bowl; 3, The bell barrow; 4, The twin barrow, consisting of two adjacent tumuli, one of them generally larger than the other, and both inclosed in one fosse or vallum; 5, The Druid barrow, generally a broad and low tumulus, surrounded by a vallum."—P. 43.

Our author states that cists are not always north and south, as generally supposed, but are often east and west; and in one curious instance thirty cists were discovered, disposed in two regular rows, at equal distances apart, and their heads to the north-east. A line along their ends was nearly east and west, and from this they declined obliquely, in the direction of north-east and south-west. On those and other peculiarities of a similar description, it is remarked that "the discovery of any important deviation from the customary rites of sepulture is probable evidence of some unwonted change in the social condition of a people; marking, it may be, the introduction of a new element into the national creed, or the violent intrusion of some foreign race of conquerors, displacing older customs by the law of the sword. In the introduction of the funeral pile and the cinerary urn, we have one important evidence of the adoption of novel rites. In the systematic disposition of the body in a fixed direc-

tion, it is probable that we may trace another and still earlier change. Both practices are deserving of more careful investigation than they have yet received, in the relation they bear to the progressive advances of the primitive races of Scotland. But it accords with many other indications that we should find less method or design in the rude sepulchres of the earliest aborigines, than of those who had long located themselves in the glades of the old Caledonian forests, and abandoned nomadic habits for the cares and duties of a pastoral life. The establishment of such a distinction would furnish a valuable chronological guide to the archæologist in the arrangement of his materials for primitive history. The early Christian adapted the position of his grave to the aspirations of his faith; and a similar practice among older races, in all probability, bore a kindred relation to some lesson of their Pagan creed, the nature of which is not yet, perhaps, utterly beyond recall. The question of divers races is, at least, one of comparatively easy solution. On this the investigations of the practical ethnologist may throw much light, by establishing proofs of distinct craniological characteristics pertaining to the remains interred north and south, from those belonging, as I conceive, to a still earlier period, before the rude Caledonian had learned to attach a meaning to the direction in which he was laid to rest in the arms of death, or to dispose himself for his long sleep with thoughts which anticipated a future resurrection."—P. 73.

Leaving the out-door indications of the habits of the fathers of our race, we shall now glance at their in-door life. But how to discover an aboriginal house? Hand-mills and the bones of domestic animals, or those most prized in the chase, "leave no room for doubt that the sites of such must have been occupied as places of habitation. They agree very nearly with the description furnished by Tacitus of the winter dwellings of the Germans, whom he represents as digging caves in the earth, in which they lay up their grain, and whither they retire in the winter, or on the advance of an enemy to plunder the open country. The entrance to such of these subterranean dwellings as have been found sufficiently perfect to afford indications of their original character, appears to have generally been by a slanting doorway between two long, upright stones, through which the occupant must have slid into his dark abode. Occasionally a small aperture has been found at the further end, apparently to give vent to the fire, the charcoal ashes of which lie extinguished on the long-deserted floor. In some a passage of considerable length has formed the vestibule; but, so far as now appears, a solitary aperture served most frequently alike for doorway, chimney, ventilator, and even window, in so far as any gleam of daylight could penetrate into the darkened vault. One is forcibly reminded, while groping in these aboriginal retreats, of Elia's realisations of the strange social state to which they pertain, in his quaint rhapsody on candle-light, '*our peculiar and household planet!*' Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated

fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled your neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it! This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a sombre cast, derived from the tradition of these unlanterned nights! The grave humourist goes on to picture a supper-scene in these unlighted halls, rich with truthful imagining, mingled with his curious but thoughtful jests:—

“ Things that were born when none but the still night  
And his dumb candle saw his pinching throea.”

In truth, these dwellings, constructed with such laborious ingenuity in every district of Scotland, seem to throw a strange light upon that dim and remote era to which they belong, giving us some insight into the domestic habits and social comforts of a period heretofore dark as their own unilluminated vaults.”—P. 80.

There is an interesting chapter on temples and memorial stones which we must pass over, notwithstanding some tempting extractable matter about the great rocking-stone at Kirkmichael, which is seven feet high at one haunch, and five at the other; which weighs between three and four tons; and which, after being made to move through an arc of a foot, oscillates twenty-eight times after the motive power is withdrawn. Coming on to weapons and implements, we quote the following with the view of anticipating gainsayers as to the character of flint armoury:—

“ About 1809, it was found necessary to remove a large cairn on the Moor of Glenquicken, Kirkcudbrightshire, which popular tradition assigned as the tomb of some unknown Galwegian king, styled Aldus M'Galdus. When the cairn had been removed, the workmen came to a stone coffin of very rude workmanship, and on removing the lid, they found the skeleton of man of uncommon size. The bones were in such a state of decomposition, that the ribs and vertebræ crumbled into dust on attempting to lift them. The remaining bones being more compact, were taken out, when it was discovered that one of the arms had been almost separated from the shoulder by the stroke of a stone axe, and that a fragment of the axe still remained in the bone. The axe had been of green stone, a species of stone never found in this part of Scotland. There were also found with this skeleton a ball of flint, about three inches in diameter, which was perfectly round and highly polished, and the head of an arrow, also of flint, but not a particle of any metallic substance.”—P. 131.

Posterity improved on the stone axe, and called the new weapon by a name which Elihu Burritt and Joseph Sturge, and other men of peace, would hardly deem appropriate.

“ A mediæval offensive weapon, constructed on the same principle, bore the quaint name of ‘The Morning Star,’ an epithet no doubt suggested by its form; as it consisted of a ball of iron armed with radiating spikes, attached by a chain to its handle. Like the ruder flail-stone, the morning star, when efficiently wielded, must have proved a

deadly weapon in the desultory warfare of undisciplined assailants; but whenever the value of combined operations was discovered and acted upon it would have to be thrown aside, as probably more fatal to friends than to enemies. In the Scottish flail-stones the perforation is bevelled off so as to admit of their free use without their cutting or fraying the thong by which they were held. We shall not probably greatly err in assuming these to be the first ‘morning stars’ of that old twilight, in the uncertain light of which we are groping for some stray truths of the infancy of history.”—P. 133.

Leaving grim-visaged war, and passing over “stone vessels,” we are next introduced to the department of “personal ornaments.” Mr. Wilson holds the stone period to have boasted of bracelets, hair-pins, neck ornaments made of bone, jet, shale, cannel-coal, glass, &c., so that refinement must have wielded its gentle sway amongst the mothers and daughters of ancient Caledonia, even as martial prowess characterised its fathers and sons. “Crania” concludes the stone period section, and, coming from the head-quarters of phrenology, one is anxious to know what Mr. Wilson has to say on ancient heads. Well, he gives us drawings of fifteen skulls, with measurements and descriptions thereof, which the curious may examine and read. As for us, we are indolent enough to be contented with “Dr. Pritchard’s remarks in reply to the question,—Was there anything peculiar in the conformation of the head in the British or Gaulish races?—‘There are probably in existence sufficient means for deciding this inquiry in the skulls found in old British cairns or places of sepulture. I have seen about half-a-dozen skulls found in different parts of England, in situations which rendered it highly probable that they belonged to ancient Britons. All these partook of one striking characteristic, viz., a remarkable narrowness of the forehead compared with the occiput, giving a very small space to the anterior lobes of the brain, and allowing room for a large development of the posterior lobes. There are some modern English and Welsh heads to be seen of a similar form, but they are not numerous.’”—P. 179.

Mr. Wilson has some interesting remarks on the teeth found in these crania, which we cannot dismiss so summarily, as they show from what minute sources, but still under strict induction, the facts of archæological science are gathered together.

“The ground-down teeth of certain classes of ancient crania is of very general application, and has been observed as common even among British sailors. The cause is obvious, resulting from the similarity of food in both cases. The old Briton of the Anglo-Roman period, and the Saxon both of England and the Scottish Lothians, had lived to a great extent on barley bread, oaten cakes, parched peas, or the like fare, producing the same results on his teeth as the hard sea-biscuit does on those of the British sailor. Such, however, is not generally the case, and in no instance, indeed, to the same extent, in the skulls found in the earlier British tumuli. In our Scottish examples the

teeth are mostly very perfect, and their crowns not at all worn down. In one the under jaw has been preserved, and in it the wisdom-teeth are only partially developed, indicating the age of the individual. The perfectly-formed teeth are not much more worn than those which had never pierced the gums.

"The inferences to be drawn from such a comparison are of considerable value in the indications they afford of the domestic habits and social life of a race, the last survivor of which has mouldered underneath his green tumulus, perchance for centuries before the era of our earliest authentic chronicles. As a means of comparison, this characteristic appearance of the teeth manifestly furnishes one means of discriminating between an early and a still earlier, if not primeval, period; and though not in itself conclusive, it may be found of considerable value when taken in connexion with the other and still more obvious peculiarities of the crania of the earliest barrows. We perceive from it, at least, that a very decided change took place in the common food of the country, from the period when the native Briton of the primeval period pursued the chase with the flint lance and arrow, and the spear of deer's-horn, to that comparatively recent period when the Saxon marauders began to effect settlements and build houses on the scenes where they had ravaged the villages of the older British natives. The first class, we may infer, attempted little cultivation of the soil. Improving on the precarious chances of a mere nomadic or hunter life, we have been led to suppose, from other evidence, that the early Briton introduced the rudiments of a pastoral life, while yet his dwelling was only the slight circular earth-pit, inclosed with overhanging boughs and skins. To the spoils of the chase he would then add the milk of his flock of goats or sheep; probably with no other addition than such wild esculents, mast, or fruits as might be gathered without labour in the glades of the neighbouring forest. But the social state in the British Isles was a progressive one. Whether by the gradual improvement of the aboriginal race, or by the incursion of foreign tribes already familiar with the fruits of agricultural labour, the wild pastoral or hunter life of the first settlers was exchanged for one more suited to call forth the social virtues. The increase of the population, whether by the ingress of such new tribes or by the numerical progression of the first settlers, would of itself put an end to the possibility of finding subsistence by means of the chase. Thus it might be from the inventive industry which privations force into activity that new wants were first discovered, new tastes were created, and satisfied by the annual harvests of golden grain. The ploughshare and the pruning-hook divided attention with the sword and the spear, which they could not supplant; and the ingenious agriculturist devised his oaken querne, his stone-rubber or corn-crusher, and at length his simple yet effective hand-mill, which resisted, during many centuries of change and progress, all attempts to supersede it by more complicated machinery. Dr. Pettigrew, in communicating the results of a series

of observations on the bones found in various English barrows, remarks, 'The state of the teeth in all of them indicated that the people had lived chiefly on grain and roots.' The dry, hard oaten cake of the Scottish peasant, which may have been in use almost from the first attempt at cultivation of the favourite national grain, would probably prove as effective as any of the presumed vegetable foods for producing such results. We need not, at any rate, evidence to satisfy us that the luxuries which have rendered the services of the dentist so indispensable to the modern Briton were altogether excluded from the regimen of his rude forefathers."—P. 187.

Mr. Wilson's next section is the ARCHAIC, OR BRONZE period. From it we learn that Scotland narrowly escaped becoming a Californian region. "In the Leadhills considerable quantities of gold have been procured at no very distant period, while numerous allusions suffice to show its greater abundance in former times. In the twelfth century, the Abbey of Dunfermline received a grant from David I. of the tithe of all the gold produced by the surrounding districts of Fife and Forthrey; and even in the sixteenth century the Laird of Marchiston is said to have wrought gold in the Pentland Hills. In the remoter era, however, to which we now refer [the bronze period], when the rude Caledonian was learning, for the first time, to fashion his weapons and tools of bronze, and to substitute the golden torc and armilla for the necklace of perforated shells or stone and amber beads, we are justified in assuming from analogy that in many of the channels of the Scottish mountain-streams, amid the strata of which the ore has been found, not only the gold dust, but pure masses of native gold would be occasionally discovered, and wrought with no better tools than the stone hammer and anvil into the personal ornaments of distinguished leaders or priests. Strabo, in referring to the great mineral wealth of Spain, which made it to the ancients what America became to the Spaniards long after their native mineral treasures were exhausted, remarks: 'In no country are gold, silver, copper, and iron so abundant, or of such fine quality; even the rivers and mountain-streams bring down gold in their beds, which is found in their sands.' Yet such a description is now as little applicable to Spain as to Scotland. But more recent and conclusive evidence exists."—P. 206.

The evidence consists of an account of gold discovered in Ireland so late as 1795; but as our space will not admit of the whole evidence being given, we shall not do "injustice to Ireland" by abridging it. Turning, therefore, from anticipated discoveries of gold to the actual excavations of baser metals, we are told that, "towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the spirit of agricultural improvement was beginning to take effect, the use of marl as a valuable manure was advocated and practised with a zeal no less wide-spread and enthusiastic than has resulted in our own day from the discovery of the guano islands of the Pacific. One of the most zealous of these Scotch agriculturists was Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield, whose estate is bounded on the north by the

romantic Duddingstone Loch, near Edinburgh. In 1775 he constructed a canal, and prepared a couple of flat-bottomed boats, with the requisite dredging-machinery attached to them. These were set afloat on the loch, and their projector thus describes some of the most interesting results of his labours: 'In the third year of my progress, in dragging successfully great quantities of marl, now and then in the middle of the lake I met with large fragments of deer's-horns of an uncommon magnitude. As my operations were proceeding northward, about one hundred and fifty yards from the verge of the lake next the King's Park, the people employed in dredging in places deeper than usual, after having removed the first surfaces of fat blackish mould, got into a bed of shell marl from five to seven feet deep, from which they brought up in the collecting leather bag a very weighty substance, which, when examined as it was thrown into the marl boat, was a heap of swords, spears, and other lumps of brass, mixed with the purest of the shell marl. Some of the lumps of brass seemed as if half-melted; and my conjecture is, that there had been upon the side of the hill, near the lake, some manufactory for brass arms of the several kinds for which there was a demand.'

"Rarely has a more interesting discovery been made, or one on an equally extensive scale, illustrative of the Scottish bronze period. Some of the most perfect and beautiful of these ancient weapons were presented to George III.; others, doubtless also among the best specimens, were retained as family heirlooms, some of which were afterwards given to Sir Walter Scott; but the remainder, including upwards of fifty pieces of swords, spear-heads, and fragments of other weapons, most of them more or less affected by fire, were presented to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and formed the very first donation towards the founding of their valuable collection of national antiquities. The royal gifts and nearly all the family heirlooms have disappeared, but the whole of those presented to the Society still remain in their museum. The swords are of the usual leaf-shaped form, with perforated handles, to which horn or wood has been attached. Some of the larger broken spear-heads have been pierced with a variety of ornamental perforations; and in addition to these there were bronze rings and staples, similar to those found on various occasions with other remains of the same period."—P. 225.

As we referred to the teeth of the stone period, we may follow up the physiological part of the subject by describing the hands of the bronze era, especially as "it is worthy of note, in relation to the makers and owners of the swords of this era, that the handles are invariably small. One of the most marked ethnological characteristics of the pure Celtic race, in contrast to the Teutonic, is the small hands and feet; a feature so very partially affected by the mingling of Teutonic with the old Celtic blood of Scotland, that many of the older basket-hilted Highland swords will scarcely admit the hand of a modern Scotsman of ordinary size. This has been observed in various primitive races, and is noted by Mr.

Stephens as characteristic of the ancient temple-builders of Yucatan. In describing the well-known *red hand*, first observed at Uxmal, Mr. Stephens remarks: 'Over a cavity in the mortar were two conspicuous marks, which afterwards stared us in the face in all the ruined buildings of the country. They were the prints of a red hand, with the thumb and fingers extended, not drawn or painted, but stamped by the living hand, the pressure of the palm upon the stone. There was one striking feature about these hands—they were exceedingly small. Either of our own spread over and completely hid them.' This is another of the physical characteristics of the earlier races well worthy of further note. While the delicate small hand and foot are ordinarily looked upon as marks of high-breeding, and are justly regarded as pertaining to the perfect beauty of the female form, the opposite are found among the masculine distinctions of the pure Teutonic races—characteristics of their essentially practical and aggressive spirit—and are frequently seen most markedly developed in the skilful manipulator and ingenious mechanician."—P. 231.

The bronze, and also the iron period, take up the same topics and in the same order as the stone, so far as the diverse characters of the different epochs admit of common arrangement; and this affords opportunity for instituting comparisons as to progress. As an instance of this we may cite a specimen of the naval architecture of the bronze period, which will admit of favourable contrast with the Glasgow boats of the stone age:—

"'In this town' (Stranraer), says the old historian of Galloway, writing in 1683, 'the last year, while they were digging a water-gate for a mill, they lighted upon a ship a considerable distance from the shore, unto which the sea at the highest spring tides never comes. It was transversely under a little bourn, and wholly covered with earth a considerable depth; for there was a good yard, with kail growing in it, upon the one end of it. By that part of it which was gotten out, my informers, who saw it, conjecture that the vessel had been pretty large; they also tell me that the boards were not joined together after the usual fashion of our present ships or barks, as also that it had nails of copper.' Here we find remarkable evidence of progress. The rude arts of the aboriginal seaman, by which he laboriously hollowed the oaken trunk, and adapted it for navigating his native seas, have been superseded by a systematic process of ship-building, in which the metallic tools sufficed to hew and shape the planks as well as to furnish the copper fastenings by which they were secured. Vessels thus constructed were doubtless designed for wider excursions than the navigation of native estuaries and inland seas; nor must we assume, because the records of ancient history have heretofore concentrated our interest on the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, that therefore the German Ocean and the British seas were a waste of unpeopled waters, save, perhaps, when some rude canoe, borne beyond its wonted shelter on the coasts, timorously struggled to regain the shore."—P. 235.



Mr. Wilson submits elaborate chemical analyses of relics belonging to this period; but no chemical investigation, qualitative or quantitative, tempts him to sacrifice anything of importance at the shrine of the crucible.

"In selecting specimens of native bronze implements from the Scottish collection for the purpose of analysis, no difficulty was found," says he, "in obtaining *broken fragments* suitable for the purpose, without destroying any perfect example of primitive art."

Another graceful episode relates to the "broken sword;" and trusting that it will be pleasing to the reader, we quote the passage.

It appears that several of the bronze swords in the Scottish Museum are broken, and the remains have been found among the sepulchral deposits. "From such discoveries we are led to infer," says Mr. Wilson, "that one of the last honours paid to the buried warrior was to break his well-proved weapon and lay it at his side, ere the cist was closed, or the inurned ashes deposited in the grave, and his old companions in arms piled over it the tumulus or memorial cairn. No more touching or eloquent tribute of honour breaks upon us amid the curious records of ages long past. The elf-bolt and the stone axe of the older barrow speak only of the barbarian anticipation of eternal warfare beyond the grave; of skull-beakers and draughts of bloody wine, such as the untutored savage looks forward to in his dreams of heaven. But the broken sword of the buried chief seems to tell of a warfare accomplished, and of expected rest. Doubtless the future which he anticipated bore faint enough resemblance to the 'life and immortality' since revealed to men; but the broken sword speaks in unmistakeable language of elevation and progress, and of nobler ideas acquired by the old Briton, when he no longer deemed it indispensable to bear his arms with him to the elysium of his wild creed.

"This graceful custom would appear to have been peculiar to Britain, or it has escaped the attention of northern antiquaries. Mr. Worsaae makes no mention of it in describing corresponding Scandinavian weapons, but rather seems to imply the opposite when thus referring to a later period: 'Skillful armourers were then in great request; and although in other cases the Danish warrior would have thought it unbecoming and dangerous to disturb the peace of the dead, he did not scruple to break open a barrow or a grave, if by such means he could obtain the renowned weapon which had been deposited beside the hero who had wielded it.' Thus we learn that, from the remotest times even to our own day, the northern warrior has esteemed his sword the most sacred emblem of military honour. In later ages, the leaders of mediæval chivalry gave names to their favoured weapons, the troubadours celebrated their virtues with all the extravagance of romances, and still the soldier's favourite sword is laid on his bier when his comrades bear him to his rest."—P. 265.

Gallantry should always be associated with the sword; and we cannot better follow up the last

quotation than by citing a few sentences regarding ancient rings. Premising that these articles were of yore colossal, Dr. Hibbert remarks that "in Iceland a less bulky ring for the ratification of engagements was introduced. Within the hof was a division, like a choir in a church, where stood an elevation in the middle of the floor, and an altar. Upon the altar was placed a ring, without any joint, of the value of two oras. These rings (idly named Druidical amulets) are variously formed of bone, of jet, of stone, and even of the precious metals. Some are so wide as to allow the palm of the hand to be passed through them, which rings were used when parties entered into mutual compacts. In a woodcut given in an old edition of 'Olaus Magnus,' the solemnisation of a betrothing contract is represented by the bridegroom passing his four fingers and palm through a large ring, and in this manner receiving the hand of the bride. This is similar to the mode practised in Orkney, where contracting parties join hands through the perforation, or more properly speaking the ring, of a stone pillar. In the oath administered to an individual as a test of veracity, it was sufficient that he held in his hand a ring of small size, dipped in the blood of sacrificial victims."—P. 302.

Commenting on this, Mr. Wilson considers that, "viewed in the above light, the frequent occurrence of such relics in the cist, or under the memorial cairn, may be pregnant with a far higher meaning than the mere ornamental fibula or amulet. When found with the spear and sword, the ring may indicate the grave of the warrior-priest or lawgiver—a union of offices so consistent with society in a primitive state; while, in the female barrow, amid the bracelets and necklaces which once adorned the primitive British matron, the curious relic may, with no undue indulgence of fancy, be looked upon as the spousal pledge, and the literal wedding-ring. It seems, indeed, most probable, that the little golden ring with which, in these modern centuries, we wed, is none other than the symbolic memorial of the old sacramental ring which witnessed the vows of our rude island fathers, and was made the pledge of their plighted troth. This, however, is perhaps trespassing beyond the pale of legitimate induction into the seductive regions of fancy, where antiquaries have too frequently chosen to wander at their own sweet will."—P. 303.

Our author has an interesting chapter on the religion, arts, and domestic habits of the period under consideration, which will repay perusal. Its title, as well as that of others of those relating to British history prior to the first century of the Christian era, he admits, "may appear to readers of indices as not a little presumptuous. These chapters deal exclusively with a period believed to have long preceded written history, and of which we possess no other records than those that have been garnered in the grave, wherein is 'no knowledge,' or chance-found amid the alluvium and peat-mosses, in which the geologist discerns many evidences of antiquity, but from which he has yet failed to deduce any defined measure that will help us to their age. Still we have discovered,

in the ruder productions of the primitive period, that the simplest works of man bear some ineffaceable traces of his intelligence. The sagacious inductions of Cuvier have met with universal acceptance in their definition of the form, the size, the food, and the general haunts and habits of the megalonyx, a gigantic antediluvian sloth, only a few disjointed bones of which are known to exist. We need not therefore despair of learning somewhat of the early Caledonian, of his habits, his thoughts, and even of his faith, when we are able to refer to so many specimens of his handiwork and inventive design, and retain some relics of his ruined temples, and abundant illustrations of his sepulchral rites. It is by simple induction, however, that the discovery of such truths is arrived at. Intentionally, at least, no rein is given here to fanciful speculation, nor are any theories advanced but such as are believed to be based on the suggestive aspects of ascertained truths."—P. 336.

On the subject, then, of creed, we are subsequently informed that "we are not entirely dependant on negative evidence in relation to the primitive creed. We are led to the conclusion that the ancient Briton lived in the belief of a future state, and of some doctrine of probation and of final retribution, from the constant deposition beside the dead, not only of weapons, implements, and personal ornaments, but also of vessels which may be presumed to have contained food and drink. That his ideas of a future state bore little resemblance to 'the life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel' is abundantly manifest from the same evidence. Somewhat, however, is added to our knowledge of his religion, if the inference be admitted to be a legitimate one which deduces, from the absence of all imitation of natural objects in his ornamental designs, the conclusion that idolatry has pertained under no form to the worship of the native Briton. Whether his religion was a fetish-worship, with spells and strange magical rites; or that he brought from his far-eastern birth-land the Chaldean star-worship or the Persian fire-worship; or knelt to Sylvanus and the *Campestres Æterni Britannia*—the supposed haunters of his native fields and forests, to whom the Roman legions afterwards reared altars and poured out libations—it seems consistent with all analogy to conclude that no visible forms were worshipped within the Caledonian groves or monolithic temples. Julius Cæsar, in his oft-quoted account of the Druids, describes the Gauls as much addicted to religious observances, and names Mars, Apollo, Jupiter, Minerva, and Mercury, as objects of their worship. Of Mercury especially, he adds, they have many images, and they esteem him as the inventor of the arts. This, however, might be true enough of the continental Gauls of that late period, who had then long been partially brought into contact with the Romans, and yet be totally inapplicable to the Caledonians, who had no direct knowledge of them for fully a century after the date of Cæsar's first landing on the white cliffs of England. As to the theories relating to Celtic Druidism, concerning which so much has been written, an opinion has already been ex-

pressed. It is one of the many branches of primitive history, in which, after having perused all the ponderous tomes which have been devoted to its elucidation, the archæologist returns with renewed satisfaction to the trustworthy though imperfect and scanty records which he finds in the relics of primitive invention and archaic design. The truths contained in these ample dissertations are mostly too few and uncertain to be worth the labour of sifting from the heap in which they may be buried, at the rate of about a grain of truth to a bushel of fancy. Still, from the authentic allusions of classic writers, we may safely conclude thus far, that a native priesthood exercised a most important influence over the later Celtic and Teutonic races of Britain, as appears to have been the case among most of the nations of the Indo-European family."—P. 342.

We shall now glance at some of the points touched on in the iron period.

"The changes consequent on the introduction of iron, to a people already familiar with the smelting of tin and copper ores, and the fabrication of weapons and implements of bronze, were not necessarily of a radical character, and undoubtedly were first experienced in the gradual acquirement of the new metal from foreign sources. Had bronze been obtainable in sufficient quantities to admit of its application to the numerous purposes for which iron has since been used, there was nothing to prevent the accomplishment of nearly all to which European civilisation has since attained, without the knowledge of the new metal. The opposite, however, was the case. The metal was costly and scarce, and hence one of the most obvious sources of the lengthened period over which we have seen reason to believe that the archaic era extended. Throughout that whole period, metal in every form was a rare and valued luxury; and it was as such that iron, the most widely diffused, the most abundant and most useful of all the metals, was first introduced into the British Isles. This is sufficiently accounted for from the fact, that iron rarely, if ever, occurs in nature in a metallic state; and that it requires great labour and a most intense heat to fuse it. . . It was only when iron had become thus plentiful that it could be productive of any effective change on the characteristics of the races by whom it was used. But though iron is the most abundant of all the metals, and was the latest to be introduced into use, it is at the same time the most perishable, rapidly oxidising, unless preserved by the most favourable circumstances. Accordingly, very few iron relics pertaining to the later pagan era has been found."—P. 346.

Passing to Roman relics, the favourite theme of Jonathan Oldbuck and the antiquarian fraternity, we find allusion made to recent attempts to deny Roman honours to Edinburgh, and in contradiction to which we are told that "earlier writers were not so ready to exclude the Scottish capital from Roman honours: *e.g.*,—'The town of Eaden,' says Camden, 'commonly called Edenborow, the same undoubtedly with Ptolemy's *Stratopedon Eteroton*, *i. e.*, *Castrum Alatum*.' Sir Robert

Sibbald was one of the first of our Scottish authors to place a Roman colonia at Edinburgh, but without advancing any satisfactory grounds for such a conclusion. 'Some,' says he, 'think Edinburgh the *Caer-Eden* mentioned in the ancient authors.' Others, equally bent on maintaining the honour of the Scottish metropolis, found in it the *Alauna* of Ptolemy, and in the neighbouring Water of Leith the *Alauna Fluvius*—a discovery perhaps not unworthy to match with that of Richard Moniplies when he sneered down the Thames with ineffable contempt in comparison with the same favourite stream! Such arguments, like those for too many other Romano-Scottish sites, were mere theories, unsupported by evidence; and little more can be advanced in favour of the supposed *Castrum Alatum*. Later writers on the Roman antiquities of Scotland have accordingly excluded Edinburgh from the list of classic localities. There are not wanting, however, satisfactory traces of Roman remains on the site of the Scottish capital, a due attention to which may help to furnish materials for a revised map of the Roman Iter.

"There passes across the most ancient districts of Edinburgh, and skirting the line of its oldest fortifications, a road leading through the Pleasance, so called from an old convent once dedicated to S. Maria de Placentia—St. Mary's Wynd, another conventual memorial—Leith Wynd, St. Ninian's Row, Broughton, and Canonmills, right onward in the direction of the ancient port of Alaterna. Probably more than fourteen hundred years have elapsed since Curia and Alaterna were finally abandoned by their Roman occupants, and the dwellings of the Eildon colony were left to crumble into ruins; yet the traces of the Romans' footsteps have not been so utterly obliterated but that we can still recover them along the line of this old road, so deeply imprinted with the tread of later generations."—P. 384.

We cannot go into particulars regarding the Roman relics discovered, in proof of this position, as we prefer topics of a more general complexion. We shall, therefore, conclude our specific descriptions by extracting Mr. Wilson's account of "Scottish Burghs," with this caveat, that the phrase does not apply to those noisy communities who, at the instigation of TAIT'S MAGAZINE, clamoured so much for enfranchisement during the Reform era, and who still enact a somewhat obtrusive part in the political drama. On the contrary, they are "large circular fortresses, or bell-shaped structures, built of unhewn stone, and entirely without cement. The most perfect example of these remarkable edifices is situated upon the island of Mousa, near to the mainland of Zetland; but many remains of them can still be traced, both on the northern and western isles, in Caithness and Sutherland, and on various parts of the north and west coasts of Scotland. They are nearly all formed precisely on the same plan, though differing considerably in size. The form is a truncated cone, occasionally slightly varied, as in that of Mousa, where the wall curves inwards till it attains a certain height, and then returns gradually outward again, apparently with the same design as the corbelled battlements of a

later date, which enabled the defenders more effectually to annoy any assailant who ventured to approach the base. With this exception, the exterior displays no ornamental projections, or any provision for defensive operations, by means of window, loop-hole, or machicolation. The rude but very substantial masonry of the exterior is only broken by a plain, narrow doorway, which, from the absence of gate-posts, grooves, or any of the ordinary refinements of more modern architecture, it is not improbable was secured, when danger was imminent, by building it up with a pile of stones. Within the exterior cone a second cylindrical structure is reared, the walls of which are either perpendicular, or constructed at an angle which, leaving a space between the two of about six feet at the base, brings them together at the top. Within this space between the walls a rude staircase, or rather inclined passage, communicates round the whole, and a series of chambers, or tiers of inter-spaces, formed by means of long stones laid across from wall to wall, so as to form flooring and ceiling, are lighted by square apertures looking into the interior area. This central space is open to the sky, and the fact of the only light to the chambers and passages within being derived by means of apertures opening into it, seems to preclude the idea of its ever having been roofed. It is not apparent, however, by what means the occupants could obtain access to the ramparts, so as to resist an assault, and prevent the walls from being scaled, though a sufficiently rude and simple wooden structure may have supplied this very obvious defect."—P. 420.

We might go on multiplying similar quotations, but, in Mr. Wilson's own words, "enough has already been advanced to disabuse us of the fallacy, that where no annals of a people have been preserved nothing worth chronicling can have existed." And we shall now proceed to say somewhat as to the position and prospects of Scottish archæology. The science is, and has been, crippled by the ignorance and avarice not only of the common people but of those of whom better things might have been expected.

"The history of Scottish gold relics is only a sad commentary on the miserable fruits resulting chiefly from the operation of the law of treasure-trove. A short way to the east of Chesterlee Station, in the parish of Dolphinton, Lanarkshire, an ornament of pure gold was found, which is said to have resembled the snaffle-bit of a horse's bridle. As this is usually a twisted iron rod, there can be little doubt that the Chesterlee relic was a funicular torc. A 'gold chain,' ploughed up on the glebe lands of Mortlach parish, Banffshire, and described in the old statistical account of the parish as 'like an ornament for the neck of one of the chiefs;' and another 'golden chain,' found at Thrumster, in the parish of Wick, Caithness, 'which in a year of famine the discoverer sold to a baillie in Wick for a boll of oatmeal,' may both be assumed, with little hesitation, to have been golden torcs.

"A relic found towards the close of last century on the farm of Balmae, Kirkcudbrightshire, and

sold by the discoverer for about 20*l.*, may also be classed among the lost examples of the same description. It is described as 'a straight plate of gold, which was somewhat thick at each end and at the middle. It bent easily at the centre, so as to admit the two extremities to meet.'

"Another example, found about forty years ago in Argyshire, was sold for a trifle to a Glasgow goldsmith, and consigned to the crucible. In 1834, some workmen quarrying stones near the bridge over Douglas Water, Carnichael, Lanarkshire, discovered a pair of armillæ weighing twenty-nine sovereigns, which were destined to the same fate; but, fortunately, the Marquis of Douglas learned of the discovery in time to repurchase them ere they had been converted into modern trinkets, and they are now safe in that nobleman's possession. Mr. Albert Way illustrates his communication to the 'Archæological Journal,' 'On Ancient Armillæ of Gold,' &c., with an engraving of one of a very beautiful pair found in 1848 on the estate of Mr. Dundas, of Arniston, at Largo, in Fifeshire, of the same type as those previously discovered in the Loch of Galloway. Mr. Way remarks of them: 'These beautiful ornaments are formed of a thin plate or riband of gold, skilfully twisted, the spiral line being preserved with singular precision. It would be easy to multiply examples of torc ornaments, more or less similar in type, found in this country, and especially in Ireland; but none that I have seen possess an equal degree of elegance and perfection of workmanship.' Mr. Dundas furnishes the following interesting note in relation to the discovery: 'The gold bracelets were found last winter on the top of a steep bank which slopes down to the sea, among some loose earth which was being dug to be carted away. The soil is sandy, and the men had dug about three feet, where the bracelets lay. It was at a place close to the sea-shore, called the Temple, which is part of the village of Lower Largo. An old woman who has lived close to the spot all her days, says that in her youth some coffins were found there, and one man was supposed to have found a treasure, having suddenly become rich enough to build a house.' The neighbourhood of Largo Bay is celebrated in the annals of Scottish archæology for one of the most celebrated hoards ever discovered, described in a later chapter as the 'Silver Armour of Norrie's Law.' Only a very small portion of this collection was rescued from the crucible; and the moiety of the Largo Bay relics which escaped the same fate appears to have been even less, if we may credit the extremely probable tradition of the locality. With the wonted perverse modesty of Scottish antiquaries, Mr. Dundas accompanies his account of the latter discovery with a reference to the advantages of the neighbouring bay as a safe anchorage, and the probability of its having been a favourite landing-place of the northern freebooters. How strange is it, that rather than believe in the possibility of the existence of early native art, this improbable theory should have been fostered and bandied about by intelligent writers, with-

out contradiction, for upwards of a century!"—P. 319.

Of course, wherever mischief is a-going "navies" are sure to be implicated. "A beautiful armilla, manifestly belonging to a well-developed era of art, was discovered in 1846, at Slateford, about three miles west from Edinburgh, during the progress of the works required in constructing the Caledonian Railway. The labourer who found it decamped immediately with his prize. It was shown by him to the treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, but while negotiations were pending for its purchase, the discoverer took fright under the apprehension of having his spoil reclaimed, and before the clue could be recovered, it was consigned to the melting-pot. It was justly described (and Mr. Wilson's plate justifies the description) by the distinguished Danish antiquary, Mr. Worsaae, who saw it during his visit to Scotland, as a relic that would have adorned any museum in Europe. Its loss affords another painful evidence of the necessity for some modification of the Scottish law of treasure-trove, as well as for a comprehensive system for the preservation of primitive works of native art. Fortunately, a *fac-simile* was made of it previous to its destruction, and is now preserved in the Scottish Museum."—P. 324.

But "navies" may well be excused when belted knights have been guilty of like Vandalism. An "oon" having been prostituted to common purposes, Sir John Clerk, a zealous antiquary, thus refers to the barbarian cupidity of Sir Michael Bruce, on whose estate of Stonehouse this remarkable and indeed unique relic stood.—"He has pulled it down and made use of all the stones for a mill-dam, and yet without any intention of preserving his fame to posterity, as the destroyer of the Temple of Djana had. No other motive had this Gothic knight but to procure as many stones as he could have purchased in his own quarries for five shillings! . . . We all curse him with bell, book, and candle—an excommunicatory service not yet fallen into disuse."

Antipodal to these destroyers are what may be termed microscopic archæologists—men who want to explain everything. Of their researches it is truly said that "it may be doubted if some of their more recent attempts to determine the exact purpose for which each variety of implement was designed tend to satisfactory results. When it is considered that the most expert and sagacious archæologist would probably be puzzled to explain the purpose of one-half the tools of a modern carpenter or locksmith, it is surely assuming too much, when he stumbles on the hoarded weapons and implements of the old Briton, who has reposed underneath his monumental tumulus, with all the secrets of his craft buried with him, for full two thousand years, to pretend to more than a very general determination of their uses. Much mischief, indeed, is done, in the present stage of the science, by such attempts at 'being wise above that which is written.' These relics are our written records of the old ages, and it is well that we should avoid bringing their chronicleings into dis-

credit by forcing on them an interpretation they will not legitimately bear."—P. 251.

Archæology has claims on all, but in the past these claims have been much neglected. It is not yet too late; and if the intelligent were to give heart and hand, they might still, at the eleventh hour, render good cause to the service.

"The statistical accounts of nearly every parish in Scotland report discoveries of ancient remains, frequently in considerable numbers. Many pass into private hands, to be forgotten and abandoned to neglect and decay, when the transient influence of novelty has passed away; many more are destroyed as soon as discovered. To the casual observer they appear mere rude clay urns characterised by little variety or art. A closer examination of them, however, shows that they are divisible by periods, classes, and the adaptation to various purposes; and it is hardly to be doubted that, with an ample and systematically arranged collection, a much more minute classification might become apparent. A more general diffusion of knowledge on this subject will, it is to be hoped, aid in the accomplishment of so desirable an end.

"With the hearty co-operation of landed proprietors, clergy, and the educated classes who have influence in rural districts, it might be effected at little cost or trouble; and it is impossible fully to anticipate the important inferences that might become obvious, in relation to the primeval history of our country, by such an accumulation of the productions of native archaic art. Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, and mediæval manufactures, have all been patiently and enthusiastically traced back to their first rude efforts. It is to the study of the infancy of mediæval art especially that the sculptors and painters of Germany, France, and England, have now turned in their enthusiastic anticipation of a new revival. Why should the infantile efforts of our own national ancestry be alone deemed unworthy of regard, rude though they be, and little akin to the favourite models of modern schools? They form an important first-link in the history of native design, and manifestly were among the earliest products of skilled labour and inventive ingenuity. It is obvious, moreover, that art must have been in use for many generations. Amid the evidences of a thinly-scattered population, examples of it are still of very frequent occurrence, after all the ravages of the spade and the plough. In these we trace its gradual improvement, and from thence

very effectually discover proofs of the progress of their constructors."—P. 269.

Should the *cui bono* school here step in with their utilitarian questionings, we have to answer that, in an earlier passage of his work, Mr. Wilson has anticipated them.

"It may appear to [such] a service of little value, the unrolling of these 'mute inglorious' records. Yet somewhat is surely gained when we reach the beginnings of things, and substitute for the old historic mist-land of myth and fable a coherent and intelligible, though dry and somewhat meagre, array of facts and legitimate deductions. It is no longer needful, however, to defend the object of our research. It is to some extent the same which the ethnologist is pursuing by a different route; though the palæontological investigations of the archæologist have yet to establish their true value in the estimation of men of science by the nature of their results. For this we wait in hope. I would only meanwhile repeat, that we cannot be justified in concluding any knowledge which once existed to be utterly lost beyond recall; and if the geologist has been able to recover so much from annals that seemed to have been folded up and laid aside ere this race was summoned into being to people a renovated world, surely we ought not to despair of being yet able to fill up our meagre outline with many details which shall satisfy the severest demands of inductive philosophy, and rest their claims to acceptance not on theory but on fact."—P. 189.

We have allowed Mr. Wilson to speak copiously for himself, and have not come much between him and our readers. His work is able, eloquent and interesting, and will advance not only the objects of archæology in his native country, but will be of considerable benefit to the science generally. The archæology of Scotland has for a long time been disjointed and scattered. It is here massed together in a compact and instructive form; the thoughtful student of antiquity and the ordinary reader will both find matter suited to their respective pursuits. Mr. Wilson's descriptions are minute and literal, while his deductions and generalisations swell imperceptibly into genuine poetry. Some of his theories will doubtless excite controversy among his brethren, but this is not the place for debate on such points, and so, with a parting commendation of his numerous and eloquent illustrations, we leave all knotty discussions to our archæological contemporaries.