

THE HAINING TUNNEL.

PROVOST CRAIG-BROWN writing in Friday's Scotsman on this subject says:—

In the course of operations connected with the outflow from the Haining Loch, near Selkirk, there has been discovered a subterranean passage, the existence of which was entirely unknown. The loch is drained by a small rivulet known at different periods as the Mill Burn, Clockie, and Clockarrow. (There is also a Clocksorrow at Linlithgow. Can any ingenious philologist suggest its meaning?) After leaving the lake, the burn flows through a deep gorge known as "The Linn," and it is about ten feet from the top of the right bank where the secret passage begins. At present the aperture, which has evidently been narrowed since the subway was constructed, is just high enough to admit a man stopping as low as he can; but, ten feet in, it expands to a height of six feet, and so continues in a straight line for 140 feet. It runs from N.N.W. to S.S.E., ending obliquely against the cellar wall of the mansionhouse, just under the front portico. That is plainly not its original termination; and the conclusion is that it was built in 1794, when the present house was constructed. Three apertures in the walls are also obvious interpolations of the same date. The passage, which is two and a half feet wide, is very substantially built of stone and lime, the bottom being paved with river stones, depressed towards the centre. It must have run some distance under an old house known to have occupied the site of the present one, and which was itself on the site of an older tower. The floor of the passage was probably at one time about level with the loch, although it is now seventeen feet above it. Over 230 years ago, the laird of Haining, Sir Riddell of Riddell, lowered the loch—about seventeen feet, according to tradition. In 1661, an action was brought against him by the Mayor of Berwick, who alleged that by draining the lake into the Tweed he had caused great destruction among salmon; to the loss of the fisheries at the river mouth. Haining did not deny the destruction of the fish, but claimed his right to lower the loch by its natural outlet, a burn which turned a mill. His argument was sustained, the Court declaring that "it was the proper use of rivers to carry away the corruption and filth of the earth, which should not be hindered by any right of fishing, which was but a casualty given and taken with the common use of the river." Truly an excellent and encouraging precedent for the modern polluter.

The fact of the bottom of the passage being nearly level with the former surface of the lake would seem to justify a guess that it may once have been a water channel. But that is untenable. A drain two feet square would carry away the loch's biggest overflow at top flood, whereas this subway is 6 feet by 2½ feet, and its bottom can never have been below the highest level of the lake. That it should have been constructed 6 feet high is sufficient evidence that it was made for a secret passage, although it is impossible to say at what period. If one were to hazard a guess, it would be that it formed a covert exit from the Haining Tower occupied by the Scots (cadets of Buccleuch) from before 1463 until 1625. They led a turbulent life, one of them being the man who sped the arrow that killed the "outlaw Murray," and who afterwards himself fell at Flodden. The egress of the passage afforded any one using it ample opportunity of escaping without observation. It is in the steep bank of the "Linn," down the bed of which a man might continue his flight for hundreds of yards unperceived.

Another theory might be advanced—that the subterranean path was connected with the old Castle of Selkirk, on the adjoining Peel Hill—the *castellum meum* of David I. in his Selkirk Abbey charter (c 1109). In September 1302, it was reported to Edward I. of England that his "fortress of Selkirk was almost finished; a postern made out of the same, faced with stone; besides a drawbridge and portcullis with a good bretasche above." Captured from the English after Wallace's return from his long absence in France, and then retaken from the Scots, the Castle of Selkirk was again repaired by Edward's order to such effect that his son, Edward II., in 1310 made it his headquarters for several days. If excavation were to reveal a continuation of the secret passage beyond the walls of the mansionhouse, much might be said in favour of its connection with the ancient castle; but in the absence of any such evidence it would be gratuitously hazardous to assume it.

In M'Gibbon and Ross's "Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland" there are several references to similar subways, notably one at Yeaster Castle, which, says Mr Ross, was doubtless a secret passage by which a garrison might retreat, or hold communications with the outside.

JOTTINGS.

THE HAINING TUNNEL.

"The talk of the town" during the week has been "the Haining tunnel." All sorts of guesses and conjectures as to its probable purposes have been hazarded. Old residents have been quizzed and "opinions" have been confidently expressed. Some say the tunnel was an outlet for water from the loch, others that it was "the old ice-house," while Provost Craig-Brown regards it as a secret passage probably leading from the Haining Tower occupied by the Scots (cadets of Buccleuch) from before 1463 until 1625.

"THE OLD ICE HOUSE."

Somewhat unfortunately for the ice-house theory, the masonry of "the old ice house" still remains intact about forty yards further up the Linn than the tunnel. Perhaps this is a pity, as a fifty yards long "ice house" in the form of an arched tunnel, paved with water stones, would have been an important relic to hand on to the future ages! The ice age could truly have furnished nothing more deeply interesting!

AN OUTLET FOR THE LOCH.

One or two considerations are rather damaging to the outlet theory. In the first place it is not known to have been customary to lead six-feet-by-two outlets from lochs through the foundations and cellars of ancient castles. In the second place a six-feet-by-two outlet from a loch would scarcely be expected to empty itself by means of a two-feet square mouth. In the third place there is no trace in the tunnel itself of its having been washed out by such a flood as would "run down" the loch; and, in the fourth place tunnelling and building a fifty yards subterranean passage, *vis* the Tower, would have been a somewhat elaborate way to let more water into "the Clockie," when a few labourers might have effected the same purpose in an afternoon, by deepening the outlet to the burn.

"A COVERT EXIT."

The Provost's theory that the tunnel was probably a secret passage from the Haining Tower is entitled to respect, coming from the best authority we have on historical Selkirkshire. The times in which the Haining Tower was occupied were turbulent, when a secret passage for purposes of retreat or as a link of communication with the outer world would be useful. The egress of the tunnel is situated in a favourable position for stealthy escape. Such subways from ancient castles are not uncommon.

THE TUNNEL VISITED.

Mr Dodds, gardener at the Haining, a the discoverer of the tunnel was good enough to escort the writer into it, on Tuesday night. Little wonder is it, the tunnel has so long escaped observation! This is how the mouth of it is reached. Crashing through between thick yew and holly bushes at the right side of the square in front of the house, one is at the top of the steep bank of the Linn in which "the Clockie" used to flow before its post course in this ravine was swallowed up by capacious drain pipe! The bank is steep and slippery, and it is only by holding on to bushes or pushing your stick well into the ground that you can keep your feet from flying in front of you. After scrambling down a few feet, going a little to the left, and turning round,

THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL.

is before you. It is guarded on the left by a very tall and beautiful elm, and on the right by an aged and wrinkled yew. Some stone and an iron grating in front of it being pushed aside you creep in "on your hunkers." Over head are very large whinstone boulders. About ten feet in you can stand upright and admire the big black snails clinging to the stones.

THE TUNNEL.

is 150 feet long, is paved with water stones depressed in the middle, in which a trickling cupful of water runs towards the mouth. The sides and roof of the tunnel are strongly built of whinstone (some dressed freestones are to be seen), and the roof is arched. From the roof hang stalactite droops, which were in course of being met from the floor. If discovery had not checked their course, Selkirk might in the dim and distant future have boasted a miniature Staffa and Iona!

HALF WAY IN.

there is a gap in the wall about a foot square and about two feet back into the solid clay, which is open to view. Further in, and about four feet up, are two lesser openings, with a whinstone ledge over which trickle a few drops of water. Into one of these holes you can see about four feet, until it goes round the corner. At the end of the tunnel you are faced by what appears like the back of a stair coming forward towards the top, and evidently built at some time to close up the secret passage. At the foot of these false steps inwards is a grating, probably for ventilation. On

EMERGING FROM THE TUNNEL.

we fortunately met the gentleman in authority over the estate, who kindly gave us permission to explore the cellars with a view to discover if possible any continuation of the tunnel inside the house. Having seen the other side of the grating, which is directly under the second pillar in front of the house, and got the line of the tunnel, we entered the dark and musty cellars by candle light.

THE CELLARS.

In the cellars nothing now remains except the old wooden and stone gantrees on which the beer barrels lay, the bins which contained a large variety of wines, and the wooden labels indicating their name and vintage. In the first cellar within the house nothing suggested the tunnel, though a peculiar opening, about two feet square, in the wall in its line was noted. The cellar beyond being next visited, our exploring instincts were quickened by the discovery of a distinct outline on the wall corresponding to a section of the arched tunnel! This was exactly behind the

PECULIAR OPENING

just referred to. It was built up by a single-brick wall. Going back to the first cellar and entering the opening we ascertained that it was in the middle of a four-foot thick wall. It was square and plastered on all sides. Its base of whinstone was about a foot and a half above the gauntrees. The sides of the roof were composed of unhewn whinstones sloping upward and inwards. The roof itself was plastered. A knock with a stick convinced us it was wooden. We inserted our stick between it and the rough edge of the unhewn stones. It went up into space 18 inches. Here probably was "the other end of the tunnel." Here possibly the warlike Scotts centuries ago dropped in times of danger into the dark passage and stealthily got outside the precincts of the Tower! We removed the board, which was soft as touchwood and black with age. But to our disappointment, stone and lime had been built over it, and still formed a roof. By sounding we ascertained that it was directly under the tiled entrance-hall to the mansion-house, and that at the spot the wall was alcoved! Thinking we had fairly exhausted the generous permit granted us, we left.

REMINISCENCES.

When in The Haining cellars we were reminded of an exploit told us many years ago by the late Archie Anderson, better known as "Auld Airchie," for long the only billposter in Selkirk, and church officer at the Congregational Church. When a young man Archie had been at the digging of the foundations of the new parts of The Haining House. Another young man was along with him. The weather was dry and the work hot. His mate, laying down his pick a moment and wiping the sweat from his brow, exclaimed—"Man, Airchie, aw could dae wi' a guid slockenin' o' their yill. Aw'm awfu' dry." "Nae suner had he spoken," said Airchie, "than the butler cam' and said we were to gang intae the cellars and help oomse! We were dumfounded. It was like as if a witch had heard him." He learned afterwards that the lady of the house passing above the trench had overheard the remark and sent them the unexpected message. The beer Airchie said was home brewed and mild, and he finished up by saying—"What racin's we had in the mornin's whae to be first at the cellar!"

MUSIC AND THE HARP.

Another story in this connection Airchie used to tell about the "young lady o' the hoose." She used to play on the harp and sing. Her music was entrancing, so much so that they could not continue working but gave themselves up to the pleasures of the ethereal sounds. "They were a fraich kind o' things she sang," said Airchie, "an' oo didna ken them, but whatever they were, they were grand!"

ANOTHER TUNNEL.

Speaking of tunnels, we visited one some years ago, with a history indeed. It was under the castle at Hastings, dating from before the time of William the Conqueror. The guide put out his light to let us "feel" the darkness. One felt inclined to exclaim "The darkness thickens." As sickness makes one value health, deafness hearing, so the

damp and darkness in that tunnel made one appreciate the beneficence of light and heat. "Shadows" were shown on the walls against which prisoners were chained by their necks, wrists, and waists, until they moaned out their weary existence.

SUBTERRANEAN CAVES.

In the same vicinity, subterranean passages and caves are hewn out of the solid rock which are capable of accommodating an army of several thousand soldiers. It takes a long time to walk through them, and it is only safe to venture with an escort. After perambulating through the various dingy caves we came on a wondrous vision—a circular hall brightly illuminated with candelabra and lamps. Three fiddlers sat behind the pillars plying their bows. A gaily-dressed company of holiday-makers danced merrily to the music, and others sat round the hall. The transition from the darkness to the brilliant light, from the sullen silence to the myotic music, and the remarkable scene presented made one rub their eyes! It was like a dream of fairyland or some Arabian Nights entertainment!

THE REV. DR. FARQUHARSON.

As will be seen from another column the minister of Selkirk is being made known to a wider public through the *Scottish Standard*, an Established Church organ. The writer evidently knows his "subject," and his sketch is faithful from the ecclesiastical side. Residents in Selkirk know the Doctor however as "a parish minister," indeed, who up to the time his health failed him took an interest not only in what concerned his "peculiar people," but in everything affecting the well-being of his parishioners at large. He visited all parishioners. Over the affairs of the Mechanics' Institute, with its Reading Room and Library, he long presided. He had a large share of the arduous work in carrying through the transition from the old parochial system of education to the School Board system, and was Chairman of the first School Board. He was a regular attender at the meetings of the Parochial Board. Some years ago his semi-jubilee was celebrated with great enthusiasm, all denominations being represented at the soiree in the Volunteer Hall. When more was heard in the town about disestablishment, the remark was often made that if all parish ministers were as faithful to their duties as Dr. Farquharson that movement would make slow progress indeed.