

VIII.—*Historical Notes on the Occurrence of Gold in the South of Scotland.*

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FROM a very early period gold has been found and worked for in Scotland. We have records dating as far back as the time of James I., in which grants were made to different parties to search and mine for this metal; and no doubt it was obtained at a much earlier period. The gold ornaments found in Scotland, with other relics of pre-historic times, were doubtless manufactured from native gold. Several localities are mentioned in these old grants where gold was to be searched for; but by far the most important district is that generally mentioned as Crawford Moor, which appears to include the range of hills at Wanlockhead and Leadhills, and the streams which fall into the Clyde on the one side, and those which reach the Nith and Annan on the other. The head water of the Tweed, where gold has been found to a limited extent, appears to have been included in this district.

The Crawford Moor district appears to have yielded a very considerable quantity of gold. It is stated that as much as £100,000 sterling was obtained in three years' washing, and various authorities mention that nuggets varying from 2 gr. 30 oz. have been found.

The usual method employed to obtain gold was by washing the alluvium in the valleys, and the gravel, &c., from the streams. In the Statistical Account of Scotland, by Sir John Sinclair, 1792, parish of Crawford, Lanarkshire, it is mentioned that on the lands of Abington vestiges of the gold workings are still seen. Professor Geikie, director of the Geological Survey, has informed me that, during the recent survey of the district, he and Mr. R. L. Jack, one of the officers of his staff, noticed the remains of what are undoubtedly ancient gold-washing places; these may be seen on Windgate Burn, Short Cleuch Water, and on the banks of the Glengonar Water, near Abington, in Lanarkshire; and on Mennock Water, half-way between Whitestone Cleuch and Wee Black Carlie, in Dumfriesshire.

The earliest official notice I have seen regarding gold in Scotland is a grant made by King David I., A.D. 1125, to the Church of the

Holy Trinity of Dunfermline, of his tenth of all the gold found in Fife and Fothrif.¹ There is also an Act of James I., A.D., 1424, which states, 'Gif ony myne of gold or siluer be fūdyn in ony lordes 'landes of y^e realme, and it be prwyt th^t thre half-pēnys of siluer 'may be fynit owt of y^e punde of leid, the lordes of parlimēt con- 'sentes th^t sik myne be y^e kinges as is vsuale in vthir realmys.'² This is interesting, as showing that at that early period the somewhat complicated process of separating silver from lead was known.³

Considerable attention appears to have been directed to the gold in Scotland in the time of James IV. It is stated in Chalmers's *Caledonia* that 'James IV., who was a great dabbler in alchemy, 'appears to have wrought some (gold) mines in Crawford Moor. In 'the Treasurer's Accounts of 1511, 12, and 13, there are a number 'of payments to Sir James Pettigrew, and the men who were 'employed under him in working the mines of Crawford Moor.' In the preface of a French account of the reign of James V., a translation of which was published in London, 1710, it is stated that 'in 'the king's reign (James V.) gold mines were found in Crawford Moor by the Germans, which afforded the king great sums. The 'Scots did separate the gold from sand by washing;' and again, 'In James Vth's time 300 men were employed for several summers in 'washing gold, of which they got above £100,000 English money.' The search for gold seems to have been vigorously prosecuted from time to time during the reign of James VI., and grants to various parties were made 'to search and try for gold,' the conditions in the grants generally being, that all gold found was to be sent to the mint in Edinburgh to be coined, one-tenth of the coinage to be retained for the Crown, and nine-tenths to be delivered to the finder. These grants generally applied to the whole of Scotland, but little appears to have been done in other localities, and the search, excepting in the Crawford Moor district, never appears to have been remunerative.

1 *Registrum de Dunfermelyn*, Bannatyne Club, p. 16, No. xxviii.

2 Thomson's *Acts of the Scottish Parliament*, vol. ii. p. 5.

3 As no silver halfpenny of the reign of James I. is known to exist, the weight of this coin is somewhat uncertain. The groat of this reign may be taken to weigh about 36 grains, the weight of a half-penny would therefore be about $4\frac{1}{2}$ grains, so three silver half-pennies to the pound of lead would represent $15\frac{1}{2}$ grains, equivalent to about 62 ounces to the ton of lead. No Scotch lead approaches to anything like this in the quantity of silver it contains,

An Act of the Privy Council, in favour of Steven Atkinson, 11th June, 1616, says,—

‘Whereas Stevin Aitkinsoun, Englishman, has vnderthane and ‘promiest to the Kingis most sacred Majestie, that vpon his awne ‘propper chairges and expensses he sall make ane new searche, ‘tryall, and discouerie of the mynes, seames, and minerallis in ‘Crawfurde Mure, with Saxeere, the Calumeere, and the Salyneere ‘stanes, and of all mettall of gold and silver, etc. . . . grantis full ‘power and commission by these presentes to the said Stevin, and ‘his seruandis and suche vtheris as he sall adjoyne vnto him, als- ‘weell countreyemen as strangeris, during his lyfetye to searche, ‘seik, worke, dig, try, discouer, and find oute all suche seames and ‘mynes of gold and silver. . . . Provyding alwayes, like as it is ‘heirby expreslie ordanit, commandit, and declairit, that the said ‘Stevin sall bring in to his Majesties Coneziehouse at Edinburgh ‘the whole gold and silver that sall be descouerit,’ to be coined, one-tenth part to be His Majesty’s due, and nine-tenths of the coined money to be delivered to ‘the said Stevin.’

A grant of James VI., in 1593, narrates that the gold, silver, lead, &c., mines in Crawford Moor and Glengonar were given to Thomas Foullis, goldsmith, in Edinburgh, for twenty-one years, in consideration of the great sums due to him ‘and his dearest spouse.’

In 1621 the gold mines ‘within the boundis of Crawfurde-mure, ‘Friersmure, and Crawfurde-johne, in the ouerward of Cliddisdale,’ was let to ‘Johnne Hyndlie, phisicioun,’ on the same terms as to Steven Atkinson.

Atkinson, in his *Discoverie and Historie of the Gold Mynes in Scotland*, 1619, mentions that a Mr. George Bowes, an Englishman, procured a commission to work the gold mines in Scotland (*temp.* James VI.); that at Winlocke Head he discovered ‘a small vaine of gold, which had much small gold upon it.’ He swore his workmen to secrecy, and after working the vein for some time carried off to England a considerable quantity of gold. Before leaving he caused the shaft to be closed up and concealed. This vein appears to have been looked for, and is alluded to by several other parties about this time; but it was never re-found. Bowes also worked at ‘Long-clough-brayes or head, up the great hill,’ where he ‘discovered a ‘small string thereof. This vaine had the sapperstone plentiful in ‘it, which sometimes held naturall gold, a little, not much.’ Here

Mr. Bowes erected a stamping-mill, and by this means 'used to gett 'small mealy gold.'

There is in the Cottonian Collection in the British Museum, an interesting MS.,¹ containing a great deal of information respecting the gold-fields of Crawford Moor. The writer appears to have been employed by some one to report on the gold-bearing district in this part of Scotland. The MS. has no date, and unfortunately it has been a good deal damaged by fire, and consequently the reading is rather fragmentary; in quoting from it, I have indicated the illegible parts by periods, and the probable continuations of words and sentences are closed in brackets. The MS. says, 'I have been 'informed in Kinge James the fou[rth's] time] Scottishmen did 'begin to washe Golde, and in King Ja[m]es] . . . somers there was 'three hundred psons wth did mainta[in themselves by washing] 'golde; but for theis 40 last yeres there hath ben little . . . fore-'said eightie yeres manie Gills, waters, and valleis have [yielded] 'therein of greater value than an hundred thousand pounds y[early] ' . . . people workinge for Golde, no vains of Gold have been 'knowne to be f[ound].' . . . The MS. then goes on to narrate numerous localities where gold has been found, which will be referred to further on, and gives a lot of the empirical jargon of the period, as to the indications where the different metallic ores—including gold, silver, tin, lead, copper, and iron—are to be found; it then proceeds, 'bie report of sundrie workmen, some whereof 'affirme that at Pontahields . . . Winlock Water, and in sundrie 'other places, they have founde golde in bignes of cherristones, and 'some greater peeces, lyinge between two rocks in a yallowe . . . 'blewishe mother or leeder' 'bie testemonie and voluntarie othes of 'such as have founde peeces of golde, and have seene founde bie 'others, one peece of 30 ounces, and some of greater waight which 'were flat and mixed wth spar, and some wth keele, and some wth 'Brimstone, and the Lorde of Markestone did show . . . three 'quarters of an ounce, and some lesser [peeces] . . . those peeces 'were torne bie the force of water . . . of y^e waters since that time 'wherebie I doe [think keele and] Brimstone are leaders to y^e vaines 'of golde.' The writer of the MS. goes on to remark upon the ignorance of the gold-washers of the district in neglecting the indications which he perceived of metallic ore; and further says that

¹ Otho, E. x. f. 12.

many trials for gold had been made on the side of the hills, and that he having 'made two daies triall in y^e toppes and sides of y^e hills, did likewise finde noe golde.' The MS. concludes with the remark 'that there hath ben . . . plentie of golde gotten in y^e waters of the said cloughes and Gillies 80 fad[oms] above the foresaid waters in y^e valleis, w^{ch} golde being ponderous . . . must bie common reason descend: so as consequentlie, wheras some peeces of [gold] of above 30 ounces weight have been founde in the said Gilles, the same must . . . growe there aboute or bie violent waters be dryven out of higher places wher they did growe wth in y^e circumference of those places where the Golde is founde.'

There is sufficient evidence to prove that gold in this district was found in no inconsiderable quantity. The writer of the MS. here referred to appears merely to have taken the evidence of the gold-washers and miners in the district, as to the quantity of gold found, and beyond the two days' search in the hill-side, to which he alludes, seems not to have done anything in examining the ground personally. In a paper contributed to the Edinburgh Geological Society, Dr. Lauder Lindsay says that some centuries ago upwards of half a million of gold was obtained by a systematic method of working, but he does not give the data on which he rests this assertion. In the French book of the life of James V., alluded to above, it is stated 'great plenty (of gold) has been got in Langholm Water, 14 miles from Leadhill House, in Crawford Moor, and in Meggat Water, 12 miles, and over Phinland 16 miles from that house, and in many other places where peices of gold 30 ounces weight have been found.' Atkinson, in his work above referred to, says: In James VI.'s reign, one Cornelius, a lapidary in London, and five others, obtained a grant to work all the gold and silver throughout the kingdom of Scotland; they commenced with a capital of £5000 Scots, at Crawford Moor, and in thirty days they sent to the mint in Edinburgh eight pounds of gold, worth £450 sterling. He also mentions that Sir Beves Bulmer, who obtained a grant to work the gold mines in Scotland in 1578-92, obtained gold, a small quantity, in 'Mannock Moore, in Nidsdale;' at 'Winlocke Water, on Robbart Moor, he gott sometimes a pretty quantity together;' at 'Fryer Moore, in Glangonner Water, he gott there reasonable good store;' 'upon Short Clough Water, on Crayford Moore, he often found good store thereof; and he gott as much gold there as would maintaine

' iij times so manie men as he did keepe, royally.' Atkinson also states, regarding Mr. George Bowes's workings, that ' upon Glen-gabere Water in Underland, within the Forrest of Atrick, Mr. Bowes gott the greatest gold, the like to it in no other place before of Scotland ; ' and he had there sometimes great gold like Indian wheate, or pearle, and black-eyed like to beans.' In the Cottonian MS. above referred to, it is stated ' gold hath ben gotten bie washinge bie y^e L. of Markes[ton] . . . distant from Leadhill Howse, in Crawford Moore, 28 myles, and [gold] hath ben gotten in Langham Water, 14 miles, and Megget Water . . . Phinlande, 16 miles distant from Leadhill Howse, and in many other [places] bie testimonie of sundrie reputed honeste ; wth golde to have been gotten . . . so far distant one from another, doth showe there are either manie se[ames] . . . y^e golde so founde is generallie dispersed, and doth but ly in y^e supfice[al] not in the solid and knit vaines.'

Besides the localities referred to above, where gold has been found, in a memorandum by Robt. Seton, *temp.* James V., it is stated gold has been found at Newtown in Angén (?) Cartburn in Annandale, Solway sands, near the new toun of Annand;¹ Glen naip,² betwixt Carrick and Galloway ; GALLOWAY, in the barony of Tareagles, and in a hill called Coloshere Hill ; in the Hill of Skrill,³ ' *mucho oro y grandes pedacos.*'

In an account of the Metals and Minerals found in Scotland, given to Sir R. Sibbald by Colonel Borthwick (*temp.* James V.), many of the localities mentioned above are given ; the only locality not already noticed is Kersop, upon Yarrow Water, in Philiphaugh ground

Various attempts have been made more recently to work the gold in this district, but it has never been found in ' paying quantities,' and any idea of now working for it profitably appears to be quite abandoned. Gold however, in small quantities, can always be found in the sand of various streams of the district and in the older alluvium. Some of the miners at Wanlockhead and Leadhills wash for it occasionally, and can always procure it for any one desiring to obtain specimens. The gold obtained in this way costs the purchaser very much above its intrinsic value ; the miner who collects it

¹ Annan (?),

² Glen-app (?),

³ The Screel of Bengairn, near Kircudbright (?),

charges so much a day for washing, and the gold in many cases will be found to cost nearly one shilling per grain.

Some years since the Duchess of Buccleuch had three or four ounces collected, and about the same quantity was recently collected for the Countess of Hopetoun, and made into ornaments. Sir T. E. Colebrooke, Bart., has also obtained from two to three ounces. Mr. Clark, of Speddoch, and others connected with the district, have from time to time obtained smaller quantities. All the gold recently collected has been got from the streams in small grains. The largest piece I have seen from this district is a small nugget, weighing 209 grains, found seventy to eighty years ago, which is in the possession of the Earl of Hopetown. The late Dr. Martin, of Leadhills, had in his possession a nugget weighing about one and a half ounces, which was found many years since near Wanlockhead.

It is only very rarely that gold has been found in this district in the matrix, *i.e.* in vein-quartz, and then it has only been obtained in detached pieces, and never *in situ*. The auriferous vein of quartz mentioned in Atkinson's *Discoverie and Historie* has never been re-found, though doubtless auriferous veins must exist somewhere in the locality. A very interesting specimen of auriferous quartz was found by a miner at Wanlockhead, in 1872. The man unfortunately broke the specimen into a number of pieces, and sold them to various individuals in the district. With the assistance of Mr. Clark, of Speddoch, I obtained the loan of all the pieces from their respective owners, and joined them together; only a few small chips were found wanting. The restored mass measures about 4" × 3" × 2½", veins of gold run through the quartz in the direction of its greatest diameter. *

The only other specimen of auriferous quartz found in this locality, which I know of, was obtained by the late Professor Traill, about the beginning of the century, and is now placed in the mineralogical collection in the Museum of Science and Art, Edinburgh.

The gold of the south of Scotland, like all Scotch gold, contains a considerable percentage of silver. I am indebted to Professor

*This specimen was found by Andrew Gemmill, who wrote to Dr. W. Lander Lindsay as follows respecting it, on the 10th February, 1875:—"About the lump of gold quartz that I found in 1872. . . . I have no bits of quartz of the same lump now. I never knew of any being found here as large. It would be about 10 lbs. weight, and mixed with gold all through, less or more. A number of gentlemen got a piece of it, and one gentleman has got a number of the pieces from the other gentlemen and is going to take a model of it;"

Church for the following analysis of some gold sent him from this locality:—

Gold	86·60	per cent.
Silver	12·39	„
Iron	·35	„
Other substances, and loss,	·66	„
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