

*A Letter from Mr. Thomas Machel of Kirkbythore
in Westmorland to Sr. W. D. March 25, 1684.
concerning some Antiquities found there.*

YOUR love to *Antiquity*, and my Obligations to you are such, that I cannot omit to give you an Account of a strange *Well*, discovered here about a week since by the foot of an *Horse*, which stumbled upon it; and therefore may be called the Fountain *Hypocrene*.

'Tis in the Street of *Kirkbythore* by the Bridge-end, on the North side of the River *Trout-Beeck*, the Antient Boundary 'twixt the Lordship of *Crackanthorpe* (my Brothers Estate) and this of *Kirkbythore*, and is about ten yards distant from it, in the common Road; and as many yards distant from the great *Roman Causey*, which leads to *Carlisle*, and goes betwixt it, and a place called the *Burwens*, being part of the Ruines of *Whelp-Castle*, on the East side of it: And 'tis very strange that a *Well* should be digged so near to the *River*, unless perhaps the *Castle-walls* have gone betwixt them, and the way run through it; as at *Maiden-Castle*, on the top of *Stancemore*.

It hath been covered with a Plank of wood about nine inches thick, in the fashion of a *Potlid*: but decayed and macerated to the colour and consistence of a *Peat* or *Turse*; insomuch, that I could hardly conjecture what wood it was made of; but I suppose *Oaks*. And above this was gravel and pavement about a yard thick, which (being tendered by the late great *Frost* and swelling of the Spring) easily gave way to the *Horse's* foot.

Instead of *Walls*, were two large wooden *Vessels*, one upon another, like *Hog-heads*, or *Wine-pipe*, with *Bung-holes* in them, about three inches *Diameter*: and the plowings for the heads were fair to be seen. They were made of *Fir* (whencesoever they came) above an inch thick; each of them in depth, by a *Perpendicular*, 6 foot at the least, at the *Heads*, in circumference no less then 8 foot, being in *Diameter* 2 foot and 8 inches: and in the middle 10 foot and 4 inches, being in *Diameter* no less then 3 foot 5 inches and $\frac{1}{2}$. The wood was found, but withal very spongy by reason of the water.

At the bottom about 5 yards deep, were 4 Planks of wood laid *quadrangular* wise, supported with a stone at every Corner, to bear up the *Fabric*, and let in water through the gravel

gravel and sand, which lay loose in the bottom about a yard deeper, as was tried by a Spit, and these also found (though the Cover was rotten) because not so much exposed to the Air.

The men that searched it, having my permission, (for it lies on my side of the high way) flattered themselves with great hopes of some *Treasure*, when they saw the appearance of a *Hog'shead* set on end: and their expectation was therefore the stronger, because they could not possibly imagine that a *Well* should be placed in an *open Street*, in a *publick high way*, and so near to the *River*: but they only found *Fabritian Plate*; old *earthen-Vessels*, with pieces of *Urnes*, one piece of a *drinking Glass*, and several *Sandals*, which may serve to bespeak the *Antiquity* of it, for sure 'tis long since any *Sandals* were worn in this *Country*.

The *earthern-Vessels* were of very fine *Metal* (if I may so call it) of a *Brick like* colour, and in several *Forms*; But the most (and most remarkable) were, like a *Bason* or *Possel-Cup*, the *Bowl*, *semiglobular*; the foot, a *Ring*: some were in *Diameter* about 8 inches, and in depth on the inside, more then $3\frac{1}{2}$, some more, some less, as appeared by the *Fragments* which came to my hand. They were (for the most part) very finely imbossed, but three more especially, *viz.* 1. One with a *Vine branch*, having a *Figure* in every turning, and in the first place a *naked Man* standing alone upon his left foot, the other leg cross, and holding his left hand down towards his back, his right towards his belly, with a branch of *Lawrel* of 3 sprigs in it, one of which turns up to his face-wards over the crooke or bending of his *Arm*; and at his feet is a *Branch* of *Lawrel* and a *Blossom* or *Flower*: In the next is a *Vine-leaf*, 2 *Blossoms* at the bottom; and at the top 2 *Peacocks* regardant: In the next is *Victory* (as I take it) *viz.* an *Angel* or *Genius* holding in its right hand (the *Arm* stretched out, and the face looking towards the *Man*) a *Garland* of *Lawrel*; in the left, a *Sprig* of the same; and two sprigs likewise are at the foot with *Flowers* or *Blossoms*, and one *Flower* in the middle betwixt the *Garland* and one of those *Sprigs*. In the next is a *Vine-leaf* the same as before, in the next is *Victory*, and so by turns, till it ends with a *Vine-leaf* next the *Man*. And upon it are also some *Goth like Characters* of the lesser sort, but dim and obscure. Another of these *Pots* is adorned with *Circles* and *Semicircles*, in one of these *Circles* is the *Figure* of a *Man*, sitting on a *Plinth* or square stone; in all the rest are fluttering *Genii*. In some of the

Semi-

Semicircles are *Lions* and *Goats* (or some such like *Creatures*) here one, there another; all single and current: and near the bottom, are *Stags* in Course and *Gray bounds* pursuing, with an *Inscription* (in a *Goth like* Character of the greater sort) which see Fig. 4. This may be *Paulini*. An *Inscription* with the like Characters, is to be seen at *Burrowbrigg* and published by Dr. *Lister*. And they have been careful in preserving these; for *this* and some other, having been broke, are crammed (or rather foldered) with lead.

3. The third sort, is yet far more beautiful then any of the rest, being adorned with *Gray-bounds* very well moulded, and in full pursuite of *Stags* and *Hinds*, and the *Wild Boar*; upon which I discovered the same *Inscription*, as in the other. And tho I am not so vain, as to say this relates to our *Coats of Arms*, yet having so near an *Affinity* with it, both in *Crest* and *Charge*; (*a*, the *Stags* head, *b*. 3. *Gray bounds* current. *c*. *Whelp Castle*) and being found at the *place* which we came from (as is said and believed) I cannot but take some notice of it; and have sent you a piece to look upon, which will (without doubt) give you more satisfaction both for the matter and colour of it, then any *Description* in writing can do. But I desire you to return it again.

There were several other broken *Inscriptions*; and one above the rest upon the *bottom* of a plane *Dish* or *Platter* (on the inside of it) writ in this manner, Fig. 5. But whether it stands for *Vespasian Imperator* or *Domitianus*, or neither of them, I cannot tell.

As to the *Glass*, there was but a very small *fragment* of it, I can scarce guess the *Figure*, but I think it a *stute Glass* made like a *Tunnel* or *Spire* inverted. But this is remarkable, that it hath been as thick as a *Barly Corn*.

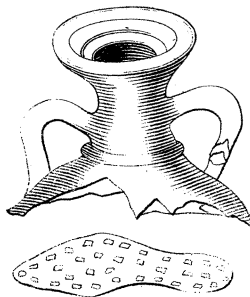
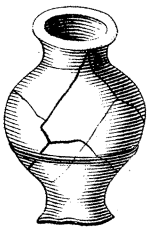
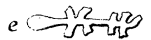
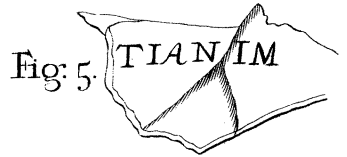
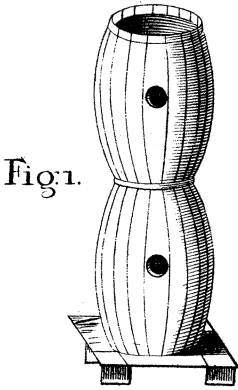
The *Urns* were of a leaden colour inclining to black; one had been large, 2 inches thick in the side of the *Pot*, but how big I know not, for there was a sherd only brought to me like half of a *Shield*: I have now the top also, being in *Diameter* from outside to outside 7 inches, of which the *Koll* is 2 inches and the *Mouth* 3 inches. The *Neck* yet straighter, and only thick there, one *thrd* of an inch. The *Figure* of which you have. And many such are found at this *Town*, some of which have *Ears* or *Handles* as thick as my *Arm-wrist*, and their *Heads* and *Mouths* much of this bigness, but thicker and stronger, such as that Fig. 6. into which I could not thrust in my hand. But the other was almost intire and whole, tho a very small one

One ; in depth or height $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the *Diameter* of it $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches which is in *Circumference* $10\frac{1}{2}$ wide ; in the *Mouth* almost $3\frac{1}{2}$; in the *Neck* somewhat more then $2\frac{1}{2}$; by the *Diameter* : the bottom well nigh as big as the top, excepting the *Ring* ; and the *Body* in thickness the fifth part of an inch : but thicker somewhat at the top and the bottom.

But the *Sandals* were most admired by me, because I never saw any before. There were some for *Men*, some for *Women*, and some for *Children* ; all shap'd by their feet, spreading more to the outside then to the inside : and some were very large and some very crooked as this in the *Cut*. The leather was fresh, of which they were made, but very tender when it came to be spread upon a *Last*. Each consisted of three principal parts ; an upper leather (or rather heel piece with 2 *Tab*s on each side) an inner *Soal*, long $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, broad $3\frac{3}{4}$ ^a ; of 3 or 4 *Soals* stitched together with leathern thongs, and an outer *Soal* ^b of 2, stuck full of *Nails* with little round heads (so decayed and rotten that I could scarce discern them to be *Iron*) plated on the inside : And to the upper leather (3 fold in the heel piece ^c) is fixed betwixt them and sowed with leather, or rather tacked, which the *Iron Nails* do help to defend. Yet I think some *Womens* (of the better sort) had no *Nails* at all ^d. And of these there is one well worth the *Observation*, of *Spanish-like* leather and curious workmanship, being exactly stich'd down round about the fore piece long $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches with a pretty *Label* ^e of the same piece, hanging from it, for fashion sake surely ; since 'tis too slender to be of any use. As small in the string as the *15 b.* part of an inch. The *Tongue* at the end broad half an inch, long one inch, betwixt the two flourishes, which is the length of the small string, 8 parts in 10 of an inch, the two flourishes take up the rest ^f. The *Figure* of which you may see. ^e

When I first discovered them, I thought peradventure, that the people here, in former times might have worn such *Shoes*, as they do in *Ireland*, and the *High lands* of *Scotland*, which they call *Broagues* : and that these might be such ; but having the opportunity of discoursing an *Whlander* that travelled by, while we were digging : and another *Gentleman* the very next day, who had travelled those *Countrys* ; I was fully satisfied that they were not *Broagues* ; for those (they say) have but one single *Soal*, and these have six, And so I leave them and the whole matter to your *Consideration*, &c.

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M. Burghers sculp.