

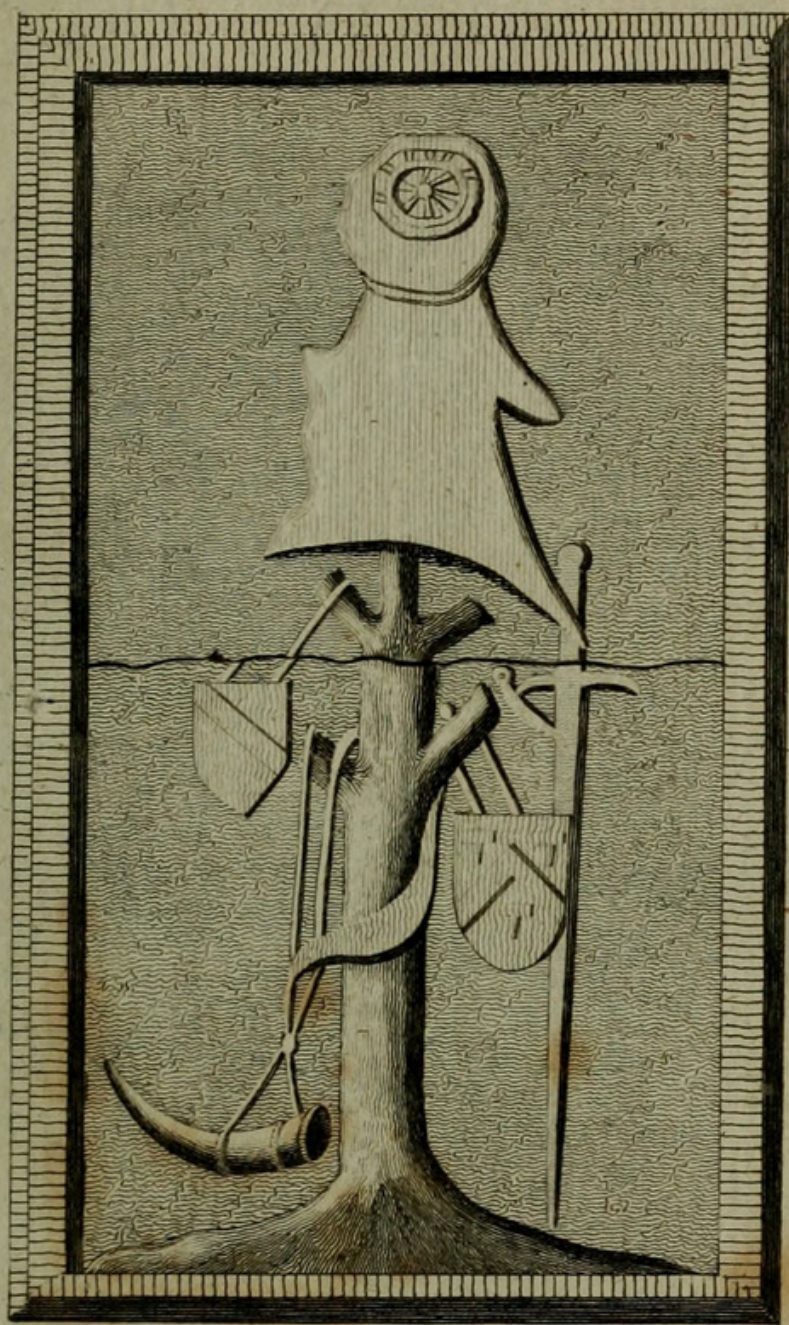
Account of an ANCIENT MONUMENT *in* HULN ABBEY, NORTHUMBERLAND ; *by* JOHN FERRIAR, M. D.

READ MARCH 28, 1788.

THE monument here exhibited, was dug up, a few years ago, from among the ruins of the church of Huln Abbey, now in possession of the Northumberland family. The table is broken, as marked in the drawing.

No account of this curious monument has yet been published, and it is so covered with ivy, in its present situation, at the west end of the church, as to escape the observation of travellers ; who are generally attracted to visit the remains of the abbey, by the uncommon beauty of its situation, more than by antiquarian zeal.

Huln abbey, the first Carmelite monastery founded in England, was built in 1240, by Ralph Fresborn, under the patronage of William de Vescy, then Lord of Alnwick, and of the immense possessions of the Tysons, granted to Ivo de Vescy by the Conqueror. During the last of the Croisades, Vescy, with some other Northumbrian Gentlemen, visited the monastery on mount Carmel. They found there Fresborn their countryman,



MONUMENT

In the Church of Huln Abbey, Northumberland

Drawn on the Spot.



tryman, one of the religious, and became so attached to him, as to desire that he might be permitted to return with them to England. The superior agreed to their request, on condition that Fresborn should found a Carmelite monastery in his native country. Fresborn chose a spot near the castle of his friend, to fulfil his obligation; the land was granted by Vesey; and Fresborn became the abbot. Tradition still denominates one of the largest towers of Alnwick castle, the Abbot's tower.

Some fancied resemblance to mount Carmel determined the site of Huln abbey. It is controverted, (as all truth is important) whether the hill on which the abbey stands, or an opposite eminence, were the object which occasioned this choice. However difficult this point may appear, it would ill become a lover of antiquity to omit an opportunity of deciding by conjecture. I must confess, then, it appears from a comparison with prints, that the site of the abbey resembles Carmel, and that the opposite rock, rising in a fine cone, almost from the brink of the river, has the appearance of mount Tabor.

But there needed not these associations of romantic devotion, in favour of a place, which, in Sandys's phrase, "would make solitariness
"delightful, and stand in competition with the
"turbulent pomp of cities."

Here,

Here, De Vescy was probably buried, and I conceive the monument before us to have formed the covering of his stone coffin,

It appears, from an inspection of many ancient monuments, that the cross was a common ornament for the covers of stone coffins, both before and after the conquest. Several specimens of this kind are brought together, in Gough's sepulchral monuments: in some, the cross is accompanied with the armorial bearings of the person interred. Our artist, with more taste, has introduced the arms and insignia of Vescy, in a kind of trophy, with very elegant fillets. I am not quite satisfied about the meaning of the wheel contained in the crest. Most of the crosses I have mentioned have a circular ornament on the top, sometimes enclosing a quatrefoil. The wheel, in this instance may allude to Vescy's travels. Or more probably it is that bearing known in books of heraldry, by the name of the *Catherine-Wheel*; a bearing, according to the Accidence of armory, proper to the most honourable persons only. It would be inaccurate not to observe, that the form of this wheel is different from that given to the Catherine-Wheel by the heralds; for in this before us, there are two concentric circles, in the outer of which, radii, like spokes, are drawn to the circumference; but whether this be a piece of ingenious flattery, by which the honour of the wheel is doubled, or whether

whether it refers to some particular incident in De Vescy's life—I believe we cannot determine.

The shield charged with a plain bend, on the right of the trophy, is said to be the ancient bearing of the Northumbrian Vescys. To whom the shield charged with a chevron, on the left, belonged, I have attempted in vain to determine. I do not remember, that it is to be found among the numerous escutcheons displayed on the gateways of the castle and abbey of Alnwick. Perhaps, in this instance, Time, in mockery of human pride, has restored the symbol of a family whose name and memory have perished. The sword and bugle horn, suspended on different sides of the trophy, intimate the baronial quality of the deceased. The monument, therefore, certainly commemorates a Baron de Vescy. But I am led to believe that this Baron was the patron of the monastery, not only from the place where the monument was found, but from a note in the old plan of the abbey, first published by Mr. Grose. *The Founder's tomb* is there marked, at the east end of the church, but no notice is taken of it, in the survey which accompanies the plan.

As it is a point undecided by authors, whether Fresborn erected the building at his own expence, or whether the munificence of his friend supplied that, as well as the park; and chiefly

because I am inclined to be of the latter opinion ; I apprehend that the title of founder of the monastery could only belong to William de Vescey. It is well known that the tombs of founders and benefactors of religious edifices were generally placed near the altar ; and nobody could say to a Norman Baron, *immemor sepulchri struis domos*.

So much of the monument of William de Vescey.—A vindication of this little disquisition may appear necessary to those who condemn the study of antiquities, as useless or uncertain. But I have ever thought, that pursuits, which add to the innocent happiness of life, are too respectable to require defence. A knowledge of antiquities implies labour and erudition, and I do not know that it disposes either to vice or folly. The charge of uncertainty can never be brought against this kind of knowledge, without recoiling on all systems ; and a true philosopher will beware of under-valuing any researches into human life ; especially such as interest our nature so strongly, as those of the antiquarian. For every one must feel, in some degree, on surveying the works of former ages, those sentiments, so well expressed in that exquisite passage, which Mr. Grose has selected, as the motto of his English antiquities ;

I do love these ancient ruins ;
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history.

And

And questionless, here, in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interred,
Lov'd th' church so well, and gave so largely to't,
They thought it should have canopy'd their bones.
Till doomesday. But all things have an end.
Churches and cities, that have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

On the NATURE and UTILITY of ELOQUENCE; by
RICHARD SHARP, F. S. A.

“Fructu, et populari estimatione, Sapientia Eloquentiæ cedit. Ita enim Salomon, *sapiens corde appellabitur prudens, sed dulcis eloquio majora reperiet*; haud obscuré innuens, Sapientiam famam quandam, et admirationem cuiuspiam conciliare, at in rebus gerendis et vita communi, eloquentiam præcipuè esse efficacem.”

Bacon de Augm. Scien. lib. VI. cap. 3.

READ NOVEMBER 2, 1787.

I MUST hope to be forgiven, for owning that I consider myself as running some risk, in venturing to solicit the attention of the Society, when I have nothing to offer but a few thoughts concerning such a kind of subject as Eloquence. Generally prevalent as the study of Physiology is at present, in this kingdom, and particularly culti-



Ferriar, John. 1790. "Account of an ancient monument in Huln Abbey, Northumberland." *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester* 3, 302–307.

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