

I.

NOTICE OF A SCULPTURED STONE IN THE CHURCHYARD AT TULLIBOLE, KINROSS-SHIRE. BY WILLIAM GALLOWAY, ARCHITECT, CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT. (Plate IV.).

The sculptured stone which forms the subject of this notice occurs in the now all but disused burying-ground at Tullibole, a parish united with that of Fossoway *circa* 1614. This burying-ground occupies a slight elevation or knoll in the immediate vicinity of Tullibole Castle, the ancestral demesne of the Moncrieffs of Tullibole, now represented by the Rev. Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff, Bart. The stone itself, hitherto practically unknown, was first brought under the notice of the Society by R. B. Armstrong, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., and lies in a recumbent position immediately to the south of the foundations of the small church in which, down to the erection of the present parish church in 1729, service was conducted every third Sabbath. The stone is quite complete in its general outlines, and is a cross-graven slab, carved on both sides, and also on the edges, and from the very small amount of uncarved space at the bottom, it must have been originally not earth-fast, but fixed in a socket. It is 4 feet 3 inches in length by 1 foot 8 inches in breadth at the top, and 1 foot 6 inches at the bottom ; at the top it is 7 inches thick, tapering to about 6 inches at the lower part. The material is a close-grained white freestone, of very good quality, but from long exposure the carving on the side lying uppermost has become very much weathered and indeterminate. This side is divided into four compartments, separated from each other by a broad bead, which is also carried round the vertical and top edges of the stone. The uppermost and largest of these compartments contains the rudely carved figure of a man on horseback ; but the details, especially of the figure, are very much effaced. Immediately to the rear of the horse is another figure on foot, equally rudely carved, but in better preservation. It is represented in fair front view, the disproportionately sized head



12 in^s 6 0 1 FOOT.

SCULPTURED STONE, TULLIBOLE.

W. Galloway, ad nat. del.

having two round pits for the eyes, an elongated sinking for the mouth, while two slight depressions below the eyes help to indicate the nose. The left hand and arm are raised vertically, a sword is suspended from the left side, and the legs are twisted together in a curious fashion, but the feet being both turned in the same direction, it may be assumed that the figure is represented in the act of walking. Beneath this group, but still in the same compartment, are three animals—horses apparently; but beyond this general fact, there is very little that is intelligible. On one side are the foreparts of two horses, proceeding or pulling in opposite directions, but bound together in the middle, forming a nondescript combination. The third animal is less in size, and equally rude.

The second compartment is much smaller than the top one, and filled in with two circular discs. Whatever carving there may have been upon one of these is now all but obliterated. The second is made up of four similar figures symmetrically arranged, connected together in the centre, where there is a small pit or depression. These figures may or may not have been zoomorphic, or phyllo-morphic; excepting the general outline, they are too much worn for this point to be easily determined. The remaining portion of this face is divided by a vertical bead into two upright compartments. One of these contains the pretty well-defined figures of two men engaged in wrestling. Their hands are planted on each other's shoulders, and one of them has his foot between his antagonist's legs, as if in the act of throwing him over. The remaining compartment contains two eared or horned serpents, coiled together, and standing on their tails *vis-a-vis*. A precisely analogous instance of this arrangement occurs on the stone at Dogtoun, or Docton, in the parish of Kinglassie, Fifeshire,¹ otherwise presenting in the rudeness of its sculpture considerable resemblance to the stone at Tullibole.²

The reverse face of the stone has been subjected to a very singular treat-

¹ *Vide* "Sculptured Stones of Scotland" (Spalding Club), vol. i. plates liii., liv.

² Subject to certain modifications in the way in which they are interlaced together, two serpents are similarly represented on the Drosten Stone, St Vigean.—*Ibid.*, plate lxix.

ment. Sufficient indications remain to show that it must have originally contained an elaborately ornamented cross filled in with an interlacing pattern, the arms being hollowed at the axillæ, and connected by a small ring. All the relief work has been, however, sedulously tooled off from the entire surface of the stone. Nothing now remains to show what there has been, except outlines, depressed surfaces still intact, pits at the intersections of the plait work, and a very small portion of the pattern at the sides of the shaft. The work of erasure has evidently been done systematically, and with a view to the entire obliteration of the design on this face of the stone. I may mention that, owing to this face being buried, all the erasures down to the very tool marks by which they were effected, are remarkably sharp and fresh, while the surfaces on the opposite face are much worn and abraded. The probability is that the cross was defaced while the stone was still upright, under the iconoclastic idea that it formed "a monument of idolatry;" but whether this took place as the result of an express edict, or on private impulse, would be a difficult point to settle.

The cross has not only been richly interlaced, but exhibits traces of several decorative accessories not often occurring on Scottish stones. The arms have terminated in scrolls circling inwards, of which the cross-graven stones at Dyce¹ and Aboyne² may be cited as analogous instances. From the several angles there appear also to have sprung floriated rays, a mode of decoration existing in a very rudimentary form in the stone at Migvie.³ The vertical edges of the stone have been carved in the bold interlacing pattern shown in the plate, and while still uninjured, it must have been a very good example of its particular class. It is earnestly to be hoped that suitable measures may be adopted for securing to this interesting memorial of a by-gone age more attention than it has hitherto received. As situated at present it lies at the risk of any accident, and is specially exposed to all the vicissitudes of the weather, and to have its eroded sculptures still further defaced by carelessness or wanton injury. Of late years many of these stones discovered in similar circumstances have been described and

¹ "Sculptured Stones of Scotland" (Spalding Club), vol. i. plate ix.

² *Ibid.*, plate xiii.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. plate lxxviii.

placed on record, and thus acquired a permanent scientific value ; many of them have, indeed, found an appropriate resting-place in the National Museum, where they form a series illustrative of the early Christian art and symbolism once prevalent in Scotland. As bearing on these points, this stone from Tullibole possesses a definite individual interest, practically lost in a state of isolation, enhanced when placed in serial order with others of its class ; and it is to be hoped that, with a view both to its own preservation, and the interests of Scottish archæology, it may speedily be added to the ever-growing collection in the National Museum of Antiquities.

I may mention as a curious fact, that neither the proprietor of the adjoining demesne nor even the minister of the parish, who has a right to the grassing of the churchyard, were aware of the existence of this stone. After making many vain inquiries, and all but given up the quest, I elicited information regarding a stone the carving on which was the object of various quasi-Biblical surmises. Our Saviour riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, a man behind holding up a palm branch, figures supposed to represent devils whom the Saviour came to destroy,—such were the vague efforts at interpretation current in the popular mind. This stone I found to be the cross-graven slab just described. For the simple beliefs referred to, I am sorry to substitute the equally simple nescience constituting the sum of the preceding notice. The stone must evidently be classed along with those numerous instances where the conventional decoration is executed in a much superior manner to the naturalistic representations, whether of men or animals. Unfortunately it is just this part of the stone which has been most subject to injury. In the present state of our knowledge, any further attempt to educe the special significance the figure subjects must have borne to those by whom they were carved would evidently be out of place. The mounted warrior is an object frequently occurring in the sculptured stones. The two men wrestling, on the contrary, form one of these special subjects which, like the two men embracing in the Glenferness stone,¹ or the woman

¹ "Sculptured Stones of Scotland," vol. i. plate xxiv.

holding a child on her knees on the stone at Crail,¹ appear to our modern ideas so odd and so incongruous on what we may assume to have been public monuments possessed of a partially religious character.