

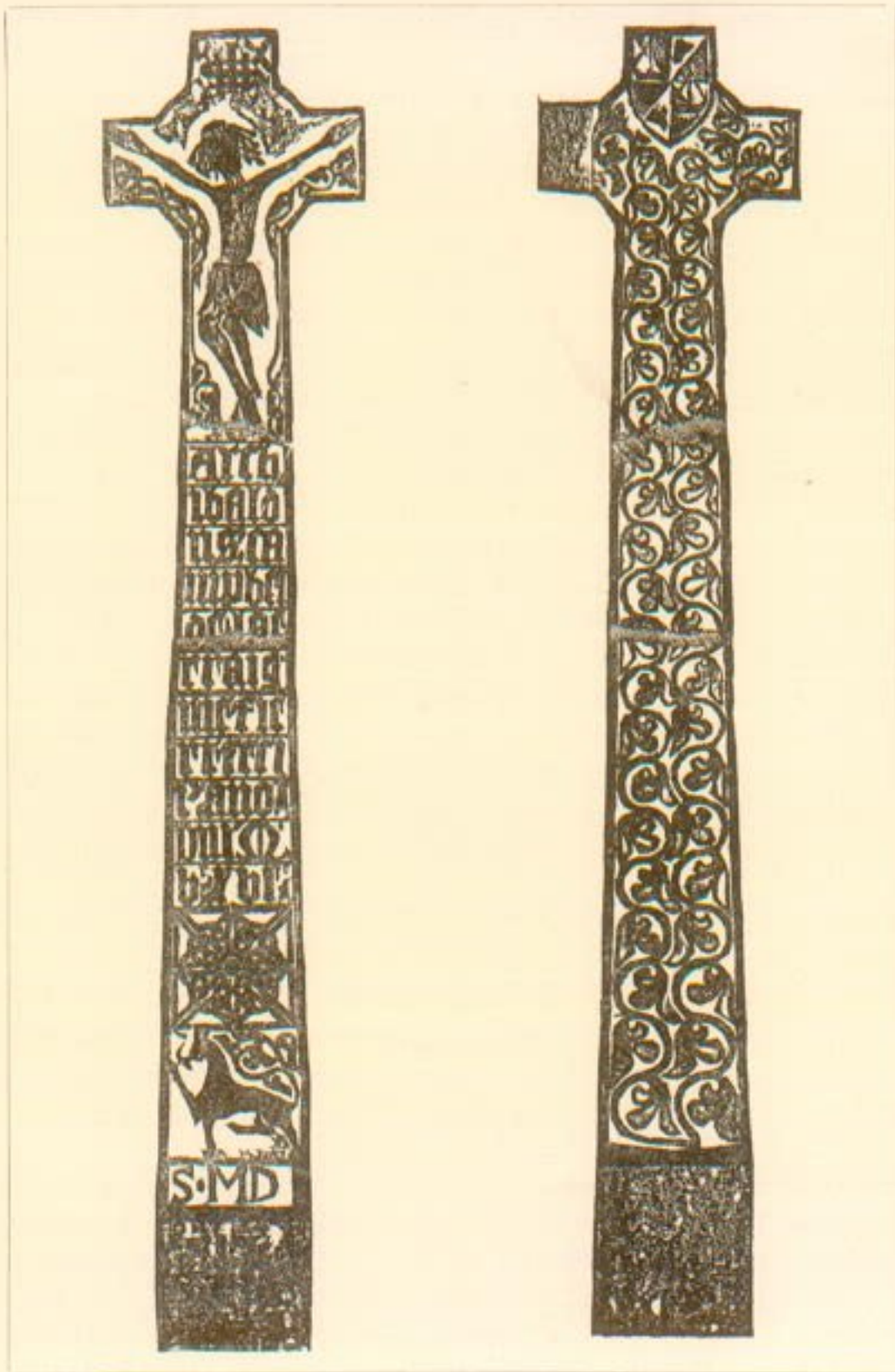
## I.

SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF EARLY CELTIC CHRISTIAN ART. BY DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., HON. MEM. S.A. SCOT., PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

The unusual representation of the Christ on the cross, crowned with a royal diadem, which occurs on the beautiful Kilmichael-Glassrie bell-shrine in the Society's collection, led me in a former communication to notice the changes in style and treatment in the representation of the Crucifixion at different periods. To this subject my attention was anew directed during the past summer. A holiday sojourn with old friends at Glenfeochan, in Argyllshire, afforded me repeated opportunities of visiting the ancient cemetery of Kilbride, and making careful drawings of the fine sculptured cross, already described in a communication to the Society from Mr J. Romilly Allen, C.E.<sup>1</sup>

The Kilbride cross (figs. 1 and 2) merits special attention in more than one respect; but its most striking feature is the indication that the head of the Christ was originally surmounted by a metal crown, probably of bronze. The elaborate ornamentation both on the back and front of this cross is in the style so characteristic of the memorial slabs of the West Highlands. But the sculptured figure differs essentially from any early example of Celtic art, and this is all the more noticeable from the perpetuation for centuries of a highly characteristic style of sepulchral monument throughout the Western Highlands, little affected by the

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, N.S. vol. iii. p. 254.



Figs. 1 and 2. Cross at Kilbride, Argyllshire (from a Rubbing by Mr J. R. Allen).

changing fashions of art beyond their own district. The progressive modifications of mediæval art are replete with interest to the historical student as indices in many cases, not merely of a change in style, but of important modifications of thought and belief; and they are all the more deserving of study in reference to localities and periods concerning which our information is otherwise scanty. I propose, therefore, in the following remarks to briefly note a few examples that have come under my own notice; and which seem to me to throw some partial light on the conceptions of the early Celtic or Culdee Church, in relation to the artistic representation of the central idea of the Christian faith, and the modifications which resulted from its being brought into closer relations with the mediæval Roman Church.

One of the most characteristic examples of early Celtic Christian art is a very curious bronze relief in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy, which Dr Stuart has figured from a careful drawing, furnished by Miss Stokes, in illustration of the *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*.<sup>1</sup> It was found at Athlone, but was assigned by the late Dr Petrie to Clonmacnoise, the central seat of early Christian art in Ireland, and believed by him to be fully a thousand years old. The ornamentation is of the peculiar style of art familiar to the student of Celtic remains on the sculptured stones, bronzes, and illuminated MSS. of the ninth and tenth centuries. It presents in bold relief the crucified Saviour, with two attendant angels above, and the spear and sponge-bearers below. The arms are disposed at right angles from the body, which is fully draped with a garment reaching to the ankles. The head is beardless, with hair short, and hanging straight over the forehead; but without either nimbus or crown. Those may be regarded as features characteristic of the representations of the Crucifixion in early Celtic art, and are found even in some late examples, as in one subsequently described, at Kilkerran, in Kintyre. The two choicest examples of Irish Celtic sculpture of this class are the beautiful memorial crosses at Monasterboice, on which the crucified Saviour is also represented fully draped. The date of these appears to be satisfactorily determined; for one of the crosses is thus inscribed:—"OR DO MUIREDACH LAS I

<sup>1</sup> *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii. pl. x.

NDERNAD IN CHROSSA," *i.e.*, A prayer for Muiredach, by whom was made this cross. Two abbots of this name are mentioned by the Irish Annalists; but the reasons assigned appear to be satisfactory for ascribing its erection to the later, but more distinguished Abbot Muiredach, whose death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster, on the 5th day of the kalends of December A.D. 923 or 924.<sup>1</sup> The dress is gradually shortened in later examples; but it still continues to be the tunic, or seamless coat, and not a waist-cloth. A curious instance occurs in the sculpture over the doorway of the Round Tower at Donaghmore, in the county of Meath, where the figure of the crucified Saviour is represented in a short tunic, but with the legs crossed. The figure correspondingly placed over the doorway of the Round Tower at Brechin is an interesting example of Scottish art, assigned to the year A.D. 1020. In this the arms are extended horizontally, the feet are apart, and the dress, as in the example at Donaghmore, reaches to the middle of the thigh. The fine sculptured doorway of the Brechin tower is accurately represented in the woodcut given in the *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*. It is on a small scale, but reduced from a large drawing executed on the spot with minute care.<sup>2</sup>

Another curious Scottish example, of which a drawing is here furnished, is well deserving the careful study of ecclesiologists. The picturesque old parish church of Duddingston is familiarly known to the citizens of Edinburgh, as a striking feature in the landscape, where it overlooks the loch at the base of Arthur's Seat. The commanding site of its churchyard is noted by Mr Muir in his *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture in the Mainland and Western Islands of Scotland*; <sup>3</sup> and its doorway is included by him in an enumeration of examples of Norman doorways embellished with the peculiar mouldings of the period; but the far more curious details of its venerable sculpture appear to have escaped his attention; indeed, so far as I am aware, they have not hitherto been pointed out, and time has already so greatly defaced them, that only a partial idea can now be formed of their

<sup>1</sup> Petrie, *Eccles. Architecture of Ireland*, 2nd edit., p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, 2nd edit., vol. ii. p. 380.

<sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture*, p. 16.

characteristic details. The church consisted originally of a simple nave and chancel ; but to this an aisle has been added on the north side, apparently in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The windows, and indeed most other details of the original Norman structure, have been

replaced by work of a later date ; so that, with the exception of the special feature to which attention is now invited, scarcely any of the external decorations of the old church remain ; but in the interior the fine Norman chancel arch is in good preservation. The south doorway has long been blocked up, and is now appropriated as the site of a modern sepulchral monument ; but some of its details are specially deserving of study. The original slender columns on either side are still *in situ*, elaborately carved with rich chevron patterns. Of the capitals from which the arch springs, the one on the east is entirely defaced ; but the other, though greatly time-worn, retains the traces of a group of figures in relief. Immediately beneath this, and protected in some degree by its projection, is the special feature to which attention is now invited. Much as the ancient doorway has suffered from the exposure of

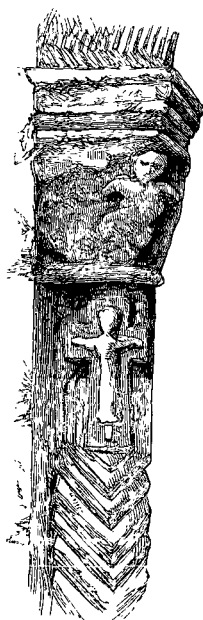


Fig. 3. West Pillar of South Doorway in Duddingston Church.

centuries, it has happily escaped the destructive operations of the restorer's hand ; and on the face of the western pillar, almost immediately below the capital, can still be traced a curious sculpture of the Crucifixion (fig. 3), of genuine Celtic design, and indeed closely resembling

in general treatment the remarkable bronze relief found at Athlone. Lower down on the same pillar, the chevron patterns are again overlaid by another piece of sculpture, apparently representing the Crucifixion of St Andrew; but it occupies a more exposed position, and has suffered correspondingly from the effect of time. But the accompanying drawings will better illustrate this unique piece of sculpture than the minutest description, and may perhaps tempt some, whose attention is thus called to its curious details, to inspect the original work. Its date may be before the close of the eleventh century, and cannot be later than the early years of the twelfth. Both in the singularity of its position, and in the treatment of this representation of the Crucifixion after the earliest manner of Celtic art, it is a work of special interest, belonging as it does to the transitional period between the marriage of Malcolm Canmore to Margaret, the grandniece of the Confessor, and the founding of Holyrood Abbey by her youngest son, David I. The fine old Norman doorway on the south side of the nave of St Giles' Collegiate Church, at Edinburgh, which remained till the close of the eighteenth century, was a nearly contemporaneous piece of work; and the indications of its elaborate sculpture, in the very imperfect representation which now constitutes the only memorial of it, may well excite regret at its destruction, and the consequent loss of all record of its details.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar characteristics of Celtic art continued to prevail in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands long after they had been displaced elsewhere by later styles. It is not therefore surprising that the Celtic mode of treatment of the Crucifixion should be found perpetuated on some of the memorial crosses and sepulchral slabs of the West Highlands, long after its disappearance elsewhere. At Kilkerran, Kintyre, may still be seen the middle portion of the shaft of a monumental cross of a comparatively late date; but of the early type, erected in memory of Colin M'Eachren, and Katherine, his wife: HEC EST : CRVX : CALENI M'HEACHYRNA ET KATERINE VXORIS EIVS. It bears a very primitive representation of the Crucifixion. The figure of the Christ is on a larger scale than the two ministering angels above, and the spear and sponge-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Historical Notices of the Collegiate Church of St Giles', Edinburgh*, Bann. Club, 1858, frontispiece.

bearer standing on either side. The head of the Saviour is surrounded by a nimbus, the arms are extended horizontally, and the dress reaches nearly to the feet which stand apart.<sup>1</sup> Another example of the same style of treatment occurs at Kilkerran, in Argyle.<sup>2</sup> A singularly rude example of the same type at Kirkholm, Wigtownshire, is figured in the *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, pl. lxx.; and it reappears on the beautiful Maclean's Cross at Iona, also figured in the same work, pl. xlii. and xliii. In others the transitional style may be traced, as on the fine Macmillan Cross at Kilmorie, Knapdale, where the waist-cloth is wrought in the interlaced pattern of earlier Celtic art.<sup>3</sup>

As the isolation of the Celtic Church of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands yielded to the more direct relations, and the increasing intercourse with Rome, the influences of continental art gradually affected the native style of design, and modified both sculpture and architecture. This is very noticeable in the treatment of the later representations of the Crucifixion. Some examples of continental art contemporaneous with the productions of Celtic origin may be noted here for the purpose of comparison. On one of two ivory leaves of the dyptich of Rambona, a piece of Italian Lombardic work ascribed to the ninth or tenth century, now in the Museum of the Vatican, there is a carving of the Crucifixion. The Saviour is represented with a short beard, flowing hair, a cruciform nimbus, the arms extended horizontally, the feet apart, and slightly draped round the loins.<sup>4</sup> Along with figures of the Virgin and St John, and other more usual accompaniments, there is carved beneath the cross the symbol of Pagan Rome, the wolf-suckled twins, with the inscription ROMULUS ET REMULUS A LUPA NUTRITI. The beautifully carved ivory comb of St Herbert, archbishop of Cologne, an undoubted work of the ninth century, now preserved in the museum of his cathedral city, has on its front the scene of the Crucifixion. The Saviour is figured with a short beard, and plain nimbus; the feet are apart, and the body is slightly vested round the loins. With the

<sup>1</sup> Drummond, *Sculpt. Monuments of Iona and the West Highlands*, pl. lxxxii.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart, *Sculpt. Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii. pl. liv.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, pls. xxiii., xxxiv.

<sup>4</sup> *Westwood's Descriptive Catalogue of Fictile Ivories*, p. 56.

exception of the nimbus, the same description is applicable to the carving of the Crucifixion on an ivory panel, originally affixed to the Gospel Book of the Church of S. Maria in Lyskirchen, near Cologne; and which Professor Westwood assigns to the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> When the sons of St Margaret succeeded to the throne of Malcolm Canmore, the Scottish Church was brought into direct relations with Rome; and the influence of continental art becomes apparent in the gradual disappearance of some of the most marked native peculiarities. A

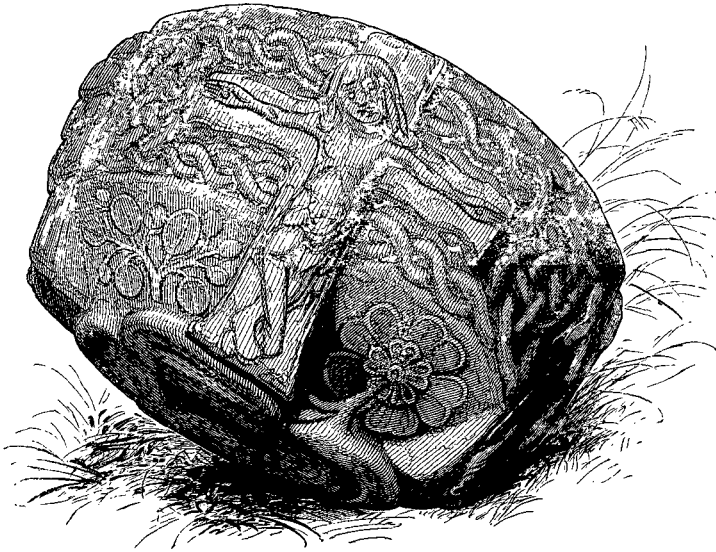


Fig. 4. Sculptured Font from the Church of St Maelrubha, Loch Aoineard, Skye.

singularly interesting illustration of the transitional style of representation of the Crucifixion, in native Celtic work of much later date, occurs on the elaborately sculptured font (fig. 4) of the ancient Church of St Maelrubha, at Loch Aoineard, Skye. The venerable saint, nearly related, through his mother, to St Congall, was born A.D. 642, and received his early training at Bangor, where, according to some authorities, he ulti-

<sup>1</sup> *Westwood's Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 165.



mately rose to be abbot. But in A.D. 671 he withdrew to Scotland, and finally settled on the north-west coast, at Apurcrossan, where he founded a monastery affiliated to Bangor, and presided over it till his death. Various churches in the Western Highlands are dedicated to him; and of that of Aoineard, the quaintly sculptured font, though the work of a period long subsequent to that of the venerable abbot, is its most curious feature. The Christ on this is sculptured with the arms

extended horizontally, the head leaning to the right, with long hair hanging over the shoulders, and the legs crossed somewhat in the fashion of the old crusading knights on the tombs in the Round Church of the Templars, London.

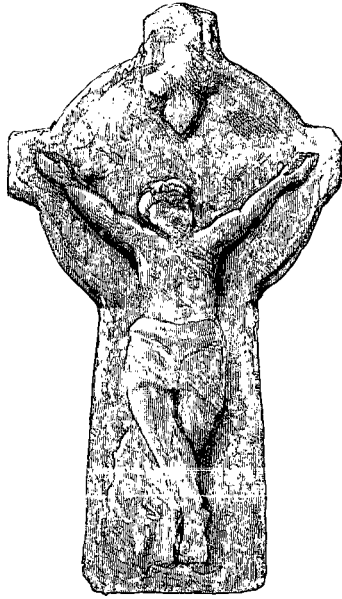


Fig. 5. Portion of Cross at St Clement's, Rowdill, Harris.

A drawing is herewith shown of a graceful, though sorely weathered sculpturing of the Crucifixion which occurs on a mutilated cross in the Church of St Clements, at Rowdill, Harris. The church itself offers to the Scottish ecclesiologist some highly interesting points of comparison with the more famous architectural remains at Iona. The cross (fig. 5) is only the upper portion broken off, and set up anew to preserve it from further injury. The crucified Saviour is represented with the limbs crossed somewhat in the manner described above. Over his head, as shown in the accompany-

ing drawing, is a sculptured device, now too much weathered to admit of its certain definition. It may have represented the symbolic dove; but it is more suggestive of the hand in benediction,—the symbol of the First Person of the Trinity,—as on the Kilmichael-Glassrie bell shrine. It is, in truth, not much more definite now, in

any specific details, than the world-famous mitre of the Abbot of Trocosie, which the complaisant eyes of Lovell discerned, to the delight of the Antiquary, *par excellence*, over the porch of Monkbarns! But notwithstanding the decay which has resulted from long exposure, the sculptured figure of the Christ retains evidence of considerable artistic skill, as well as of a style of art very dissimilar from that of works of an earlier date previously described. In all probability, when complete, the lower part of the cross contained an inscription similar in character to that of Alexander Macmillan, at Kilmore, and of other memorial crosses of the West Highlands. Of the representations of the Crucifixion in the later style of art, where the Saviour appears hanging on the cross, with only a covering round the loins, an exceptionally fine example occurs at Oronsay. An accurate representation of this fine cross, which stands upwards of 12 feet high, is given in the *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, pl. xxxviii. Dr Stuart says of it:—"On the upper part of the west face is a representation in relief of our Lord on the cross, in a very striking and effective style of art, differing from like representations on any of the other monuments." But, though thus correctly described as marked by a certain exceptional individuality in style of treatment, its essential characteristics are common to the later type. The beautiful volumes of Dr Stuart furnish other examples; and illustrate the modifications of style, due alike to the different periods, and to the individual tastes of local Celtic sculptors.

Other illustrations are available from diverse sources,—as from the Guthrie and Kilmichael-Glassrie bells; and also from various ecclesiastical seals. Among the latter may be noted the crucifixion introduced in the symbolic representation of the Trinity, on the chapter seal of Brechin;<sup>1</sup> and on a ruder and still later example on the collegiate seal of Trinity College Church, Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> At the dates of their execution, the conventional style of representation, with the accessories of the crown of thorns, the waist-cloth round the loins, the figure hanging pendent from the cross, with the feet crossed and pierced with a single nail, had come into nearly universal use throughout Christendom;

<sup>1</sup> *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, 2nd edit., vol. ii. p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> *Registrum Domus de Soltre, &c.*, p. xxxii.

though not without occasional variations of local art or individual taste. One of the most characteristic Scottish examples of this late period has already been brought under the notice of the Society by Mr J. Romilly Allen, in his description of the Campbell Cross in Kilbride churchyard, Argyllshire.<sup>1</sup> The reproduction in the Society's *Proceedings* of the rubbings taken by him from the original, illustrates very effectively the elaborate ornamentation both of the obverse and reverse of the cross; but the character of the principal figure could only be imperfectly represented by such means. During a residence of several weeks in Argyllshire in the past summer, I enjoyed opportunities of repeatedly visiting the ancient cemetery, which contains the family mausoleum of the Macdougals of Lorne, and is rich in sepulchral slabs of the types familiar to us by means of Graham's *Antiquities of Iona*, Dr John Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, and above all, of James Drummond's *Sculptured Monuments in Iona and the West Highlands*. The Kilbride monuments are not included among the skilful reproductions of Drummond's pencil; but a slight sketch of the Campbell Cross is given by Graham.

The ancient cemetery of Kilbride, with its ruined church and venerable sepulchral memorials, is little more than three miles distant from Oban; and the mutilated cross has been repeatedly described. The locality, moreover, is one of venerable sanctity. The Holy Well, Tober Espie, or Tober an easbuig, —the Bishop's Well, —immediately outside of the churchyard, is one of those primitive sacred founts, on which Dr J. Hill Burton thus comments :—

The unnoticeable smallness of many of these consecrated wells makes their very reminiscence, and still semi-sacred character, all the more remarkable. The stranger in Ireland, or the Highlands of Scotland, hears rumours of a distinguished well, miles on miles off. He thinks he will find an ancient edifice over it, or some other conspicuous adjunct. Nothing of the kind. He has been lured all that distance, over rock and bog, to see a tiny spring bubbling out of the rock, such as he may see hundreds of in a tolerable walk any day. Yet if he search in old topographical authorities, he will find that the little well has ever been an important feature of the district; that century after century it has been unforgotten; and with diligence, he may perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, N.S., vol. iii. p. 254.

trace it to some incident in the life of the saint, dead more than 1200 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

I had visited the venerable cemetery repeatedly, and carefully investigated its monuments, without heeding the sacred fountain, which wells up, among the bracken and grass, about a dozen yards from the gate of the churchyard, and flows in a stream down the valley. Yet on inquiry I learned that it was familiarly known throughout the district as Tober an easbuig, or the Holy Well. Here, as we may presume, the primitive missionary, and servant of St Bridget, by whom Christianity was introduced into the wild district of Lorne, baptized his first converts; and here, through many succeeding generations, the neophytes were signed with the sign of the cross, and taught the mystic significance of the holy rite.

The Bishop's Well and the broken Cross are both referred to in one of a series of papers on the "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Argyllshire," by John S. Howson, M.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, specially treating of the stone crosses. The paper was prepared in 1842; and at a later date communicated to the Cambridge Camden Society. The cross now lies, in three detached pieces, over different graves in the old churchyard; but Mr Howson states that it "used to stand on the summit of a hill which rises immediately above the churchyard."<sup>2</sup> This statement is repeated by Mr Muir in his *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture*,<sup>3</sup> and accords with the account given to myself, that "it originally stood on the hill road leading down from Dunach to the churchyard." Mrs Annie Dowie, to whom I have since been indebted for a carefully executed rubbing of the cross, adds: "An old man is still alive who *minds* when this cross stood up, and the boys were accustomed to cast stones at it. Then it was thrown down, and lay broken and neglected, till some of the folk wanted a tombstone, and carried it off by bits." Such is the story told in the neighbourhood during the present year, nor is it wholly impossible. But the statement of its originally occupying a different site, as recorded by Mr Howson forty-four years

<sup>1</sup> *The Book Hunter*, 2nd edit., p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions, Cambridge Camden Soc.*, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture, &c., in the Mainland and the Isles*, p. 103.

ago, referred then to some indefinite period ; and the cross, though lying ever since in this remote churchyard among the hills, with no weekly congregation of worshippers, but visited only at rare intervals by chance tourists, or by the mourners gathered round the grave of a deceased friend, is nevertheless worn and defaced, as if by the tread of many generations.

From the form of the inscription, I think it probable that it was not a sepulchral monument, but a station cross, originally standing on the church road. As such, it would be more likely to attract the notice of iconoclastic emissaries, than if it had stood as a memorial cross within the churchyard. The ordinary formula of the sepulchral cross is *hec est crux*, followed by the name of the deceased. But this fine monument, which when perfect measured upwards of 11 feet in length, is inscribed ARCHIBALDUS CAMPBEL DE LAERRAIG ME FIERI FECIT ANO DNI MVXVI. It was, I imagine, in some such period of passionate religious excitement as that of A.D. 1642, when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decreed the demolition of the greatly more ancient and beautiful Ruthwell Cross, as a monument of idolatry, that the cross at Kilbride was thrown down. The contrast between the condition of the elaborate ornamentation on the reverse side, which has lain with its face to the ground, and the worn upper surface, certainly suggests that the latter has been exposed to the tread of successive generations, until the devices in relief, and especially the figure of the Saviour, have been defaced and reduced to little more than outline. Nevertheless sufficient remains, not only to indicate the unusually elaborate character of the decoration ; but also to preserve traces of some unique features, which the copy of Mr Allen's rubbing, in the *Proceedings* of the Society, fails to show. I accordingly produce herewith a careful drawing of the upper part of the cross, made on the spot, and which will help to illustrate some of the more characteristic details now referred to.

The specific inscription, with name and date, give additional value to the Kilbride Cross. In style it differs greatly from others already described. The figure is represented as extremely emaciated. It suggests the idea of being designed by an artist familiar with the style of con-

temporary Italian sculptures of the same class ; and though not in itself a work of high art, its treatment, even in its greatly mutilated state, is tender and pathetic. At the same time the general ornamentation, including the elaborate floral pattern on the back, shows it to be the work of a native sculptor, familiar with the style of art prevalent for centuries throughout the Western Highlands. It has been repeatedly referred to by different writers. Mr J. S. Howson, in the communication to the Camden Society already quoted from in reference to the original site of the cross, reproduces the inscription thus : " Archibaldus Campbell · de · Larraigne · fieri · fecit · ano · dno · M.D.VI. "; and adds—" I think it probable that the person who erected it was Campbell of Larroge, which is a neighbouring farm possessed by a family of that name ; *Larraigne* (if I read it correctly) is a Latin version of that name."<sup>1</sup> Mr H. D. Graham, in his *Antiquities of Iona*, gives a more correct version of the inscription and date. MDVI it cannot be, but the x is represented by a bold perpendicular line corresponding to the other "very large Gothic characters," as Mr Howson styles them, with a thin oblique line across, so that the first impression is that the date is A.D. MDLVI.—a date certainly very late for the erection of such a monument. But mere style is no certain guide as to date, in a region where the favourite Celtic ornamentation continued to a much later period ; and in that remote district of Lorne, where even so late as 1556—the very year after the arrival of John Knox in Scotland—there was little thought that the old order was so speedily to change, and give place to new.

In the *Origines Parochiales Scotiæ*, the editor, while professing to quote from the above notice in the *Cambridge Camden Society's Transactions*, gives the name as *Archibaldus Campbell de Larraigne*, and then adds, "Larraigne may be read Larraigne, and perhaps intended for 'Lorne,' sometimes 'Larin.'"<sup>2</sup> Professor Cosmo Innes appears to have visited Kilbride at a subsequent date ; and without recognising the monument to which he had already made the above reference, he adds in the Appendix, from his own notes taken on the spot, in 1852, a description "of a curious cross, now laid as a grave-stone, with a figure

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions Cambridge Camden Society*, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Origines Parochiales Scotiæ*, vol. ii. p. 119.

of the crucifixion surmounted by I. H. S., and bearing the name of Archibald M'Phail, but said to mark the grave of Livingstones; in Gaelic, M'Íanlea."<sup>1</sup> Mr Graham describes it as "a magnificent cross, prostrate, and broken in three pieces," and renders the inscription correctly, with the nearly defaced de Laerraig as . . . rraig. The line in which it occurs is on the exposed and fractured edge of the middle fragment of the cross, and is so nearly worn away that its rendering is a matter of some uncertainty. As shown on the drawing, it might more readily be read DM. LAERRAIG; that is *Dominus*, instead of the DE; but on comparing it with the other m's and n's, I think the portion that suggests this reading is a division mark, or comma, the same as occurs after the *s* in *Archibaldus*. Mr Graham further adds—but without giving any authority for the statement,—“This Archibald was a celebrated character, known in Gaelic as *Gilleasbuig ciar glas*, dark Grey Archibald.”<sup>2</sup> Of this once celebrated character, I have sought in vain for any definite account. One gentleman, long resident in the district, and familiar with the Gaelic language, thus writes:—“I cannot give you any reliable information as to when Gilleasbuig ciar ghlas lived. I have asked everywhere, from the Duke of Argyll to ‘the oldest inhabitant.’ The latter says he heard his father speak of him, and thinks he was one of the lairds of Leraigs, a property that almost touches Kilbride churchyard.” As my correspondent was unaware of the special motive of my inquiry, and had, I believe, no knowledge of the old cross or its inscription, the statement may be accepted as a fading tradition of some noted Campbell of Leraigs, by whom we may assume the cross to have been reared. It is noticed by Mr T. S. Muir as “a broken and apparently shortened cross of the Latin type, with an inscription, and the Crucifixion, largely and coarsely sculptured on it”; to which he adds the statement already referred to, that “it originally stood on the side of a neighbouring hill, but is now doing duty as a grave slab in the burying ground.”<sup>3</sup>

The name Archibald Campbell is of too common occurrence to

<sup>1</sup> *Origines Parochiales Scotiæ*, vol. ii. p. 826.

<sup>2</sup> *Graham's Antiquities of Iona*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of Old Church Architecture*, p. 103.

furnish any definite clue to the person by whom the cross was erected; and the shield on the back can only with certainty be assigned as the coat of an Archibald Campbell of the Argyll family, after their acquisition of Lorne. The heraldry of the Highlands in the sixteenth century was rude and loose. On this shield thus carved on the Kilbride Cross there is the galley of Lorne and the Campbell crest, both placed over the gyronny of the paternal coat, and forming a somewhat confused heraldic composition of two coats and a crest combined on one shield.

The territorial designation on the cross is confirmed by the neighbouring topography. Mr Howson, as already noted, refers to a neighbouring farm, possessed by a family of the name of Larroge. The actual name of the house and estate to which the road from Oban to Kilbride churchyard leads, is, I believe, now spelt *Leraigs*; and it was, no doubt, the Dominus or Laird of Leraigs who erected the cross in 1516. He may have been Archibald, second son of Archibald second Earl of Argyll, who had a charter of Skipnish in 1511. If so, he was the second husband of the ill-fated Janet Douglas, Lady Glamis, who was burnt for witchcraft in 1537. Her husband was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, and was killed in attempting to escape over the rocks. The identification of him as the person whose name occurs on the cross is by no means certain; but if this were established it would confirm the idea that it was no sepulchral memorial, but a station cross.

The terms in which the workmanship of the Kilbride Cross is described are very diverse. Mr Graham characterises it as "a magnificent cross"; and Mr J. Romilly Allen as "a very beautiful specimen" of this class of monuments. Mr Muir, on the contrary, refers to it as "a cross of the Latin type, with the Crucifixion largely and coarsely sculptured upon it." When the cross stood complete, rising in graceful proportions from its stone base,—including which, it cannot have measured less than 14 feet high,—it must have formed a very striking feature, appropriately surmounting the valley, with the ancient church of Kilbride, and the Holy Well which alone remains unaltered amid all the changes that centuries have wrought. The broken cross, as I



first viewed it, buried among rank grass and weeds, and with its sculpture filled in and overlaid with accumulated soil and moss, looked rude indeed. The tread, it may be of eight or ten generations, has obliterated the features, and so effectually worn away the sculptured contour of the body and lower limbs, with the garment wrapped round the loins, that the first impression is of a prostrate slab of rudest workmanship. But a more careful inspection suffices to show that it is a work executed with great care, in a good style of local art. The mode of execution of the principal figure is somewhat peculiar. It may be described as countersunk, and to this its partial preservation is due. In so far as it originally projected in relief above the general surface of the slab, it has been worn perfectly flat by the irreverent tread of successive generations,—chiefly, as I conceive, while the church was still entire, and frequented as the parish church.<sup>1</sup> The long flowing and curled locks surrounding the head and face are still entire; and the perforations round the forehead, seven in number, perpetuate the evidence of the unique feature by which it was originally adorned. A metal diadem, or crown of thorns, probably of bronze, or it may be of iron, gilt, surrounded the head; and over it is still apparent the sacred monogram, I · H · S. The peculiar arrangement of the hands, with the thumbs folded in over the palms, is also worthy of note.

Among the traces of elaborate, but partially effaced ornamentation around the figure, the half-obliterated device of the head of an animal, above the left side, with its long protruding tongue still traceable, suggests the idea of a cockatrice. On the lower portion of the shaft, which has been appropriated as the through-stone, or covering of another grave, a unicorn is quaintly sculptured, with its tail, in true Celtic fashion, flourishing into an elaborate efflorescence of ornamentation over the adjacent surface. Underneath this, and apparently on the portion of the shaft which was inserted into the socket of the plinth, some MacDougal probably, when appropriating it as a tombstone for

<sup>1</sup> A few miles off, in Glenfeochan, the deserted and roofless church of Kilmore stands in another ancient cemetery among the hills; and midway between the two the modern church of the united parishes has been built, on the road to Oban, alongside the parish schoolhouse.

his own family grave, has cut in modern Roman characters the letters S MD.

It only remains to be added that the Kilbride Cross, and the one described above which stands in the chancel of the Church of St Clement's, Harris, correspond in this respect, that both are actual crosses, on which the Saviour is represented as extended in crucifixion. But in this they are altogether exceptional. On the beautiful Oronsay Cross, the crucified Saviour is indeed the central and most prominent figure. Nevertheless, it is as a sculptured crucifixion, with its cross represented distinct from the monumental cross, on which it is introduced. On the Macmillan Cross at Kilmore, the Maclean's Cross at Iona, that at Kilchoman, Islay ; and indeed on all the examples shown in the *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, the *Sculptured Stones of Iona and the West Highlands*, as well as in other illustrated works dealing with this subject, the scene of the Crucifixion is sculptured as a monumental accessory. Sometimes it is the central and chief device ; but at other times it is only introduced as one of various scenes forming the ornamental bas-reliefs disposed in separate panels, or interspersed among elaborate geometric or floral patterns. Still more, on many of the most elaborately sculptured crosses, such as the beautiful example of Keils, North Knapdale ; that of Kildalton, on the Island of Islay ; and the lofty and singularly beautiful cross of St Martin, at Iona, the Crucifixion is entirely omitted.