

III.

NOTICE OF A BRONZE CENSER FOUND UNDER THE FLOOR OF THE OLD CHURCH OF GARVOCK, KINCARDINESHIRE. BY REV. JAMES GAMMACK, M.A., CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT.

In 1846 the parish church of Garvock, Kincardineshire, underwent a thorough repair, and a porch was added on the south side of the church. While the foundations of this porch were being excavated, the *bronze censer* now exhibited was found in the ground, but at what depth there is no information. The ground had formed part of the area of the older church, which was built in 1678 a little to the south of the present one, and the censer must at some date now unknown have been buried under the floor of that church, and not been disturbed at the building of the present edifice in 1778. There had been an older church than either of these, and it probably occupied the former of these sites. But no traditions remain with regard to the struggles in the parish at the time of the Reformation, when this censer had found its place of concealment. The later history of the censer, however, is curious, and may be used to point a moral in archæological circles.

The finding of the censer had attracted the attention of the late Andrew Jervise, and he mentioned the fact of its discovery in his *Memorials of Angus and Mearns*, p. 437, in somewhat general terms:—“Some years ago an old and pretty entire *censer* or incense pan, now preserved in the manse (Garvock), was found under the floor.” This was written in 1861 for his first edition, but when his editor was preparing the second edition in 1884, the name and knowledge of the *censer* had passed away from the manse. Happily, however, the preceding minister, Mr Mitchell, could thus far, on inquiry, give a satisfactory account of its destiny, that when he removed to Leith the censer had got mixed up with his other effects, and thus been carried away from the manse without his knowledge. Mr Mitchell lost no time in returning it to the custody of Mr Stephen, the present minister of Garvock, and it can now be described in detail.

This antique censer (fig. 1) is of bronze, and has been frequently used, as the bottom has been wasted by fire and renewed by a patch that is pinned on to the bottom from the outside. The height over all is 6 inches; width, exclusive of the loops, 4 inches. The foot is $2\frac{3}{16}$ inches in diameter, and $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in depth, being a simple rim round the bottom. The depth of the bowl is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches; the depth of the cover is $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches, inside measurement.

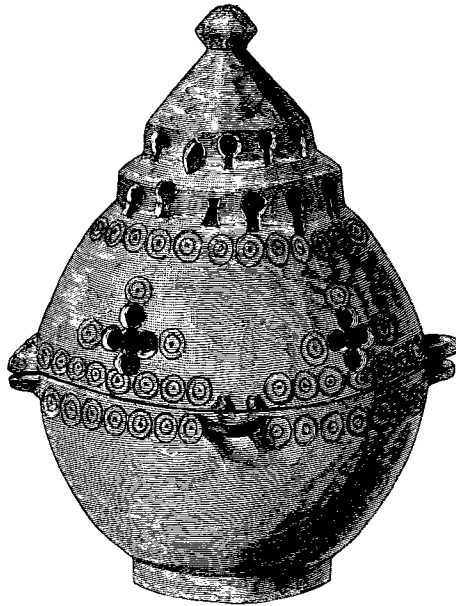


Fig. 1. Censer of Bronze found at Garvock, Kincardineshire (6 inches in height).

The censer had been swung by four chains, that passed through loops $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter: minute fragments of the chains are still attached by rust to two of the loops on the cover, and one of the loops on the cover is broken off, as if the censer and chains had been buried together, and some violence had been used in separating the mass in the ground. A fifth chain, attached near the top, had raised the cover.

The ornamentation of the censer is in point of workmanship rude but effective, and on the whole very pleasing. The loops, both above and below, have not been cast with the metal, but inserted by two pins, or, rather, projecting ends, and then hammered close up to the metal. The mould used in casting the cover had consisted of a coarse sand. As to the piece of metal used for patching the bottom of the censer, it is curious to notice that some idle hands had previously been engaged upon it, as there is quite visible, among other scratchings, the badly formed outline of a true-lovers' knot: the patch seems to be zinc.