

II.

NOTICE OF A RECUMBENT HOG-BACKED MONUMENT, AND PORTIONS OF SCULPTURED SLABS WITH SYMBOLS, RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT ST VIGEANS CHURCH, FORFARSHIRE. BY THE REV. W. DUKE, M.A., F.S.A. Scot.

The ancient sculptured stones that were known to be preserved at St Vigeans up to the publication of the late Dr John Stuart's book, in which they are illustrated, were four in number, all slabs of considerable size, though more or less mutilated. In vol. ix. of the *Proceedings* of the Society, I gave a notice of twenty-nine additional stones,—most of them mere fragments,—that had turned up during the restoration of the church in 1871-2. Three more have been found since, which I now wish to bring under the notice of the Society. I shall number them 30, 31, and 32, in continuation of the former series.

No. 30.—This stone was found in the churchyard, in a short flight of steps that led up to the church. It lay with the lettered side downwards, and the scalloping on the upper side (a diagram of which is shown in fig. 1) wholly concealed by the step immediately above. There was nothing to distinguish it from the other steps, except that

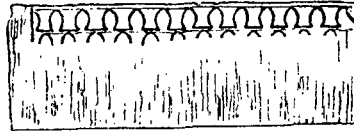


Fig. 1. Recumbent Hog-Backed Monument at St Vigeans
(59 inches in length).

it had what appeared to be a chamfer in its face. I took the opportunity of having the walk improved, to get the stone lifted for examination, when it was found to be a monument that had suffered successive degradations. The scalloping displayed, when the step above it was removed, is that of the hog-backed class of monuments, of which there is an un mutilated example at Meigle; while the letters and chamfer on the other side showed that it had been converted two centuries ago into the lintel of a door either of the church or manse. The mode

of its conversion to this second use is plain enough. The monument was cut vertically along one side of its central ridge or spine, and a chamfer worked in its base to suit the door. Only a faint trace of the ornament on this side now remains. Whether the stone was further thinned at the same time to a uniform thickness of about 6 inches, by removing the greater portion of the ornamented convex surface on the other side, or whether this operation was performed



Fig. 2. Sculptured Stone at St Vigeans.

when the stone was converted into a step, it is now impossible to say. In its present state it measures 59 by 21 by 6 inches. Its back had been horizontal, or nearly so, and it appears to have suffered curtailment by the squaring of both ends. The initials, M. R. R., are those of Master Robert Reynold, who came to St Vigeans as minister in 1650, and the date below, 1665, is the year in which he was translated to Aberdeen.

No. 31. This fragment (fig. 2), measuring 12 by 10½ inches, consists of a

thin slab of Arbroath pavement, probably not more than half its original thickness. It appears to have formed the lower portion of the slab, and was found in digging a grave at the east end of the church. The spectacle ornament presents the unusual feature of having the two outer circles at both sides interrupted by an incised line. The ornament above is evidently of a kind that is not common on such monuments, but too little of it remains for the design to be reproduced.

No. 32. This fragment was found in the beginning of the present year in digging a grave, where the soil consisted entirely of earth and rubbish removed from the foundation of the apse in 1871. The fracture at one side is quite fresh, so that the stone must have been larger at no distant date. The circles of the spectacle ornament (fig. 3) are filled

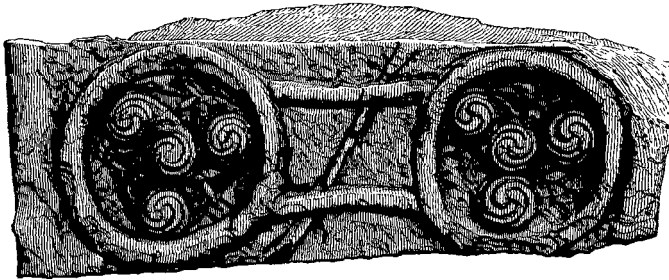


Fig. 3. Portion of Sculptured Slab at St Vigean's.

with four bosses rising from a field of connecting spirals. In the case of the Glenferness stone, the corresponding circles are filled with seven bosses. The Rosemarkie stone has also that number of bosses similarly placed, with the addition of three more on the space between the connecting lines. There appears to be no other case of bosses in connection with the spectacle ornament. It will be noticed that the cross line of the bent sceptre slopes from right to left, the only other example of which is on the Drosten Cross, also at St Vigean's. The fragment measures 10 by 4 inches, and is 3 inches thick. The reverse (fig. 4) is covered with interlaced work. This makes the fifth example of the spectacle ornament at St Vigean's. The designs are

all perfectly distinct from one another. It was pointed out, when the stone was brought to the Museum, that certain incised lines on its edge were probably a portion of an Ogham inscription, but so much defaced as to be illegible.

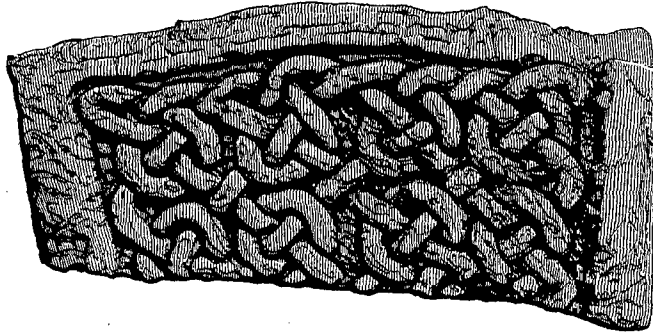


Fig. 4. Portion of Sculptured Slab at St Vigean (reverse of fig. 3).