

III.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF AN UNDESCRIBED SCULPTURED STONE, WITH INCISED SYMBOLS, IN STRATHSPEY. BY SIR ARTHUR MITCHELL, K.C.B., M.D., LL.D., VICE-PRESIDENT.

For the purpose of increasing the ground available for burials, the foundations of the old church of Inverallan (Strathspey) have been recently removed. The decay of the church was so complete that the foundations were out of sight, but in removing them they showed the building to have been about 80 feet long and 21 feet wide and to have been divided into two unequal parts by a cross wall.

Within the area occupied by the church, towards the west end and nearly at the depth of the foundations, there were found—(1) a sculptured stone, and (2) a granite boulder with a cup excavation on one of its sides.

The accompanying figure, which is roughly to scale, shows the character of the sculptured stone. It increases by one the list of the symbol stones which are distinctively Scottish. There is nothing new in the two symbols which are rudely cut on it. The figure above the crescent seems to have been cut at a later date than the other sculpturings (see fig. 1).

The stone is entirely undressed. It has already been considerably defaced by weathering; and, now that it is exposed, it will soon suffer further injuries.

The longest measurement of the stone is 3 feet 5 inches, and the greatest width 21 inches. The symbols, as shown in the sketch, are not in the centre of the face of the stone, and they are not quite symmetrical.

There is no sculpturing on the other side of the stone.

This is the fifth symbol stone in Strathspey which has been brought under notice.

The granite boulder is about 28 inches across and 16 inches deep.

The cup is about 18 inches across and 7 inches deep. There is no hole from the bottom of the cup through the boulder.

In the churchyard there is a rough undressed standing stone, called the Priest's Stone. On each side of it there is a rudely incised cross—the uprights being about 15 inches long and the cross arms about 10 inches.

One of the copestones of the dyke surrounding the burial-ground, near the gate, has an oblong shallow cavity cut on its upper surface. There is nothing about it to indicate any great age. The sexton states

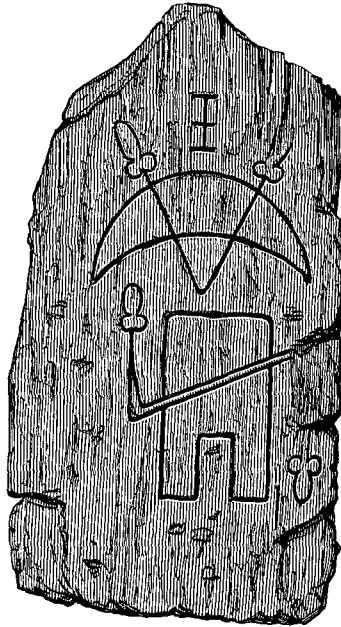


Fig. 1. Symbol Stone at Inverallan, Strathspey.

that, in his early life, the boys of the district who were troubled with warts, used to bathe their hands in the rain water filling this cavity, in the belief that so doing would cause the disappearance of the warts.