

III.

NOTICE OF A SCULPTURED CROSS, WITH CRUCIFIXION ON OBVERSE,
RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT LAMLASH. By REV. D. LANDS-
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In the month of May 1892, when the sexton was digging a grave, within a few yards of the east side of the old Lamlash Church, and about 2 feet beneath the surface of the soil, he came upon a large pillar stone, which, on being raised, was found to have upon it a sculptured figure. The sexton told the Rev. Mr Robertson of his discovery, and he gave orders that the stone should not be again buried. It was therefore left lying on the surface of the ground, turned, however, on its face, so that the figure might not be injured. In this position it was seen by a friend of mine, who told me of it. I visited it, and afterwards wrote a short notice of it, while a lady friend took for me a photograph. I afterwards showed the account and the photograph to Dr Anderson, of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh. The interest he manifested led me to mention it to Mr Thomas Smellie, architect, Kilmarnock. He, again, was so much interested as to propose that I should revisit it with him, when he would make a drawing which would bring out the details more fully than could be done by a photograph of an object lying on the ground.

On arriving at Lamlash we called on Mr Robertson, who accompanied us. As a preliminary, we provided ourselves with a bucket of water, and set to work to wash the stone thoroughly. We were abundantly re-

¹ Mark Napier, the author of *Memoirs of Montrose*.

warded, as many details were revealed which otherwise would have been overlooked.

Mr Smellie has kindly written for me the following description:—“This monolith is of white sandstone, and measures 6 feet by 1 foot 5½ inches at extremes. There is every appearance, however, of the stone having been of a greater length, a portion of the shaft having evidently been broken off. In plan, the stone shows a convex surface front and back, with square cut sides. The stone is 7 inches thick, richly carved on all the exposed faces. Our illustration (fig. 1) shows the appearance of the front, carved as it is in high relief. The principal figure is evidently intended as a representation of Christ upon the Cross. There is also what appears to be the figure of a kneeling child, as well as carvings of stars and foliage. The central figure on the back is a star of five points, enclosed in a diamond-shaped panel. This again is enclosed in an oblong panel, ornamented with trefoils and small crosses. From the centre of the oblong panel a band or fillet about 2 inches broad descends to the base. This band is supported by a scroll-work of stems and foliage. A similar scroll-work decorates the sides of the stone. The carving of the back and sides is in low relief.”

We were delighted to find that not only the front but also the back and the sides are sculptured. When found, the stone was entire, but in raising it a part of the base was broken off. The Rev. Mr Robertson told the sexton to see that this portion was not lost. The sexton, duly impressed, hid it in the ground, and did this with so much success that even he has been unable to find it. This matters the less, as it is only the unsculptured underground portion which has been lost.

The Island of Arran is exceedingly rich in ecclesiastical remains. In the churchyard at Shisken there are two small stones with flower-like crosses, and a larger exhibiting the figure of an Abbot with crook and cup; and at the entry to the little burial-place at Sannox, a stone with a rudely carved head, representing St Michael. There were chapels at Glen Ashdale, Glen Cloy, Kilbride, Kilmory, Lochranza, Sannox, and Shisken; but of these only the foundations remain, and in several cases even these are gone. Arran is said to have had also a

Convent at Lochranza, and a famous Monastery on the Holy Isle; but of these there are now no remains. It may be added that the name of a considerable hill (1346 feet) immediately behind Lamlash is Cnoc-na-croise—the Hill of the Cross.



Fig. 1. Obverse and Reverse, and part of Side, of Sculptured Cross at Lamlash.

For a considerable time the island consisted of only one parish. Hence we read of the "Vicar" and of the "Rector of Arran." Of its worship the church at Lamlash was the centre. The churchyard of Lamlash, therefore, contains more objects of antiquarian interest than any

other spot in Arran. The church itself is surprisingly small for the principal church of the island; yet this smallness, united to the thickness of its walls, built of stones unchiselled and the lintels unsquared, so unmistakably link it with the distant past that "The old Paroch Kirk of Saint Brigide" is both pleasing and venerable.

Within the church, built into the wall, are still the stone font and the piscina, though there is no trace of the altar. In the churchyard are several interesting monuments.

These are a horizontal slab, with a floral cross and a long two-handled sword carved upon it; an adjacent stone, rudely shaped, bearing the effigy of a kilted Highlander, with sword by his side; an adjoining slab having the representation of a shield and sword. Within the chapel were found two cruciform headstones, one still there; the other now placed over the grave of a sailor-boy, whose body was washed ashore in Lamash Bay. The little partitioned cell on the east side of the chapel has its floor paved with gravestones, the most remarkable of which is one with a cross and sword elegantly sculptured upon it in bas-relief, the cross and its shaft being adorned with beautiful floral and knot work ornamentation, strikingly resembling the illuminated patterns of the ancient Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts; while the sides of the stone are adorned by a trailing floral stem of graceful design.