

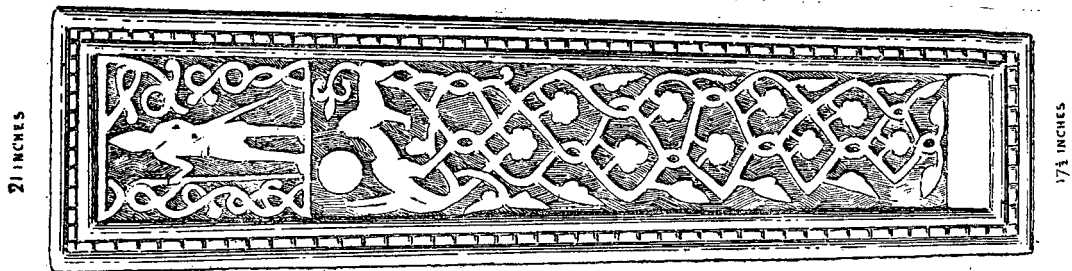
I.

NOTICE OF A GROUP OF CARVED GRAVE-SLABS AT DALMALLY, ARGYLESHIRE. By ROBERT BRYDALL, F.S.A. Scot. (WITH DRAWINGS.)

The churchyard of Dalmally—which was anciently called Clachan Dysart, or Clachan an disert—lies in the centre of that country which was possessed by the MacGregors in the time of their greatness, and wherein many of that unfortunate clan were buried. When the old church was demolished about 1811, several stone coffins were found at the north part of the east end of the church, where the MacGregors appear chiefly to have been buried; there were also found several of their tombstones, then very much defaced, which were appropriated by such of the clan as continued to use the place as a burying-ground.¹ That the carved stones were more numerous in former years than they now are may be inferred from references which have been made to stones which do not appear there now. Dean Howson, on his visit prior to 1842, wrote:—"Many of the stones in this churchyard are said to have been brought, by those who consider them as belonging to their ancestors, from Innishail, an island in Loch Awe, once much used as a place of interment. That in these cases there has often been a good deal of usurpation is exemplified by two instances at Kilchrenan and Kilmore. Among the monuments at Dalmally which seem to be remarkable is one among the tombs of the M'Intyres, and another among those of the M'Naughtons. There are two which seem to commemorate ecclesiastics: one, with a plain cross, near the burying-place of Campbell of Lachen Lochen; the other, with a rich cross flory, and below it a figure in half relief, near that of Campbell of Cailloch."² In Pennant's *Tour* (and quoted in *Origines Parochiales*) it is stated, that there were stones "with figures of a warrior, each furnished with a spear or two-handed sword; on some were representations of the chase, others

¹ *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. 3, p. 317, &c.

² *Transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society*, 1842.

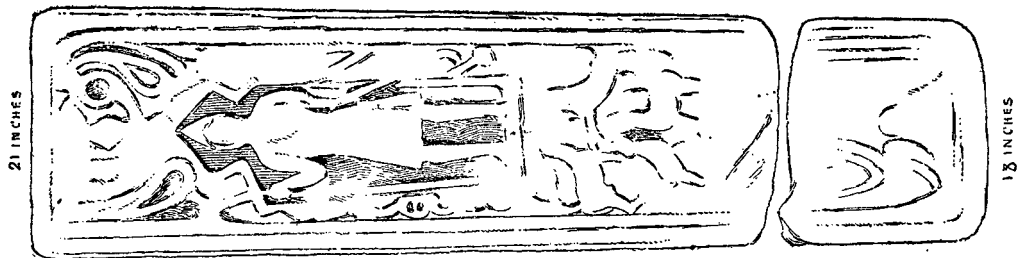


21 INCHES

17 1/2 INCHES

6 FEET 6 INCHES

Fig. 1.

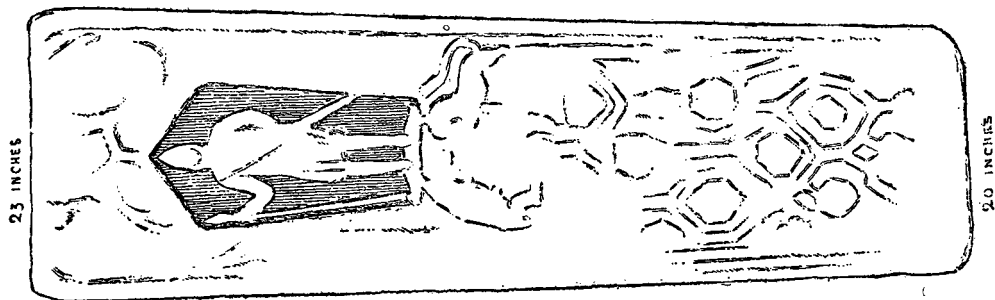


21 INCHES

13 INCHES

6 FEET 4 INCHES-

Fig. 2.



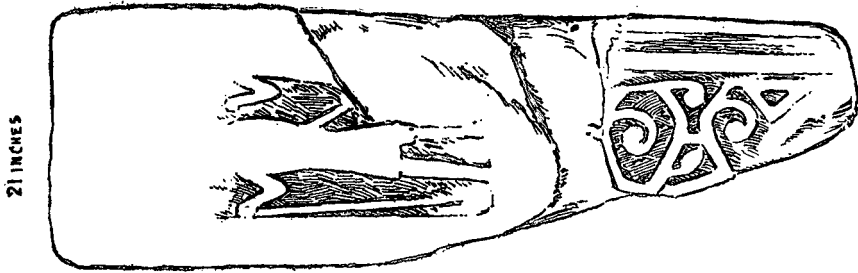
23 INCHES

20 INCHES

6 FEET 3 INCHES

Fig. 3.

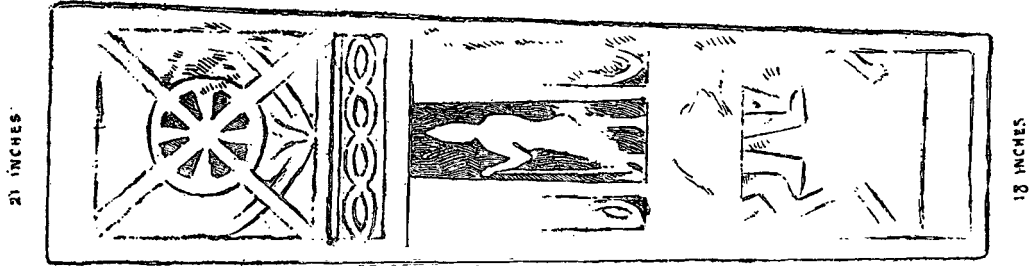
Carved Grave-Slabs at Dalmally.



21 INCHES

7 FEET 4 INCHES

Fig. 4.

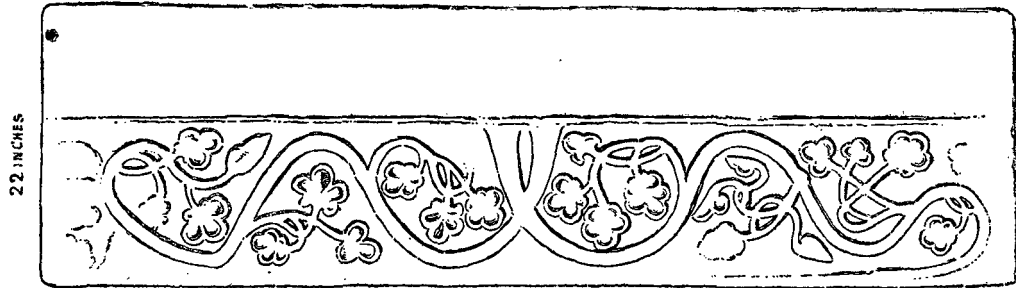


21 INCHES

18 INCHES

6 FEET 2¹/₂ INCHES

Fig. 5.



22 INCHES

6 FEET 6 INCHES

Fig. 6.

Carved Grave-Slabs at Dalmally.

elegant fret-work, and on one, said to be part of the coffin of a M'Gregor, a fine running pattern of foliage and flowers."

In the Chronicle of James MacGregor, Dean of Lismore, written before 1542, there are notices of the following twelve burials in Dysart between 1390 and 1528, all of MacGregors, in stone coffins, some on the north and some on the south sides of the high altar:—

1390. *Johannis Gregorii de Glenurquhay.*

1415. *Gregorii M'Anecham*¹ *in Glenurquhay.*

1415. *Johannis Dow*² *M'Anecham V'Gregar.*³

1440. *Malcolmi filii Johannis Nigri M'Gregor.*

1461. *Patricii M'Gregor Domini de Glenschrey.*

1494. *Terloch Keir filii Duncani M'Gregor.*

1498. *Malcolmi Makgregor filii et heredis Johannis MacGregor de Glenschray.*

1518. *Patricii M'Gregor.*

1518. *Duncani M'Gregor Custodis Castri de Glenurquhay.*⁴

1519. *Johannis Dow Patricii M'Gregor de Glenschraye.*

1526. *Gregorii filii Johannis M'Gregor alias M'Evine M'Allester de Glenschray.*

1528. *Johannis M'Evine Capitani tribus Gregoriane de Glenschray.*

The old stones are now all placed together in the south-west corner of the graveyard, and the seven of which drawings are here given are the only ones which are carved, none of them having any inscription. One, almost covered by sod, is divided into panels, with no carving.

Figs. 1, 2, and 3 are all of the same class: a panel contains an armed man with sword and spear, wearing a long pointed bascinet and short tunic, the rest of the surface being filled in with animals and ornament. Fig. 4 is curious as having borne two figures. Fig. 5, also much defaced, is peculiar in respect that on the lower part a pair of legs and feet appear, carved on a much larger scale than the man in the centre; the panelling is rather gracefully proportioned, and the surface has evidently been covered with ornament. It is possible that an attempt here has been made to alter the design of the stone, on appropriating

¹ *Son of One-eyed John.*

³ *Genitive of MacGregor.*

² *dhu, black.*

⁴ *Keeper of the Castle of Glenurquhay.*

it for another than the original grave for which it was intended. Fig. 6, like all the others, is in flat relief: two branches of foliated ornament spring from the centre, and roll gracefully outwards, the natural growth of the plant having been carefully observed. Fig. 7 is about half the size of the others, is in very good condition, and is the only one bevelled at the edge.

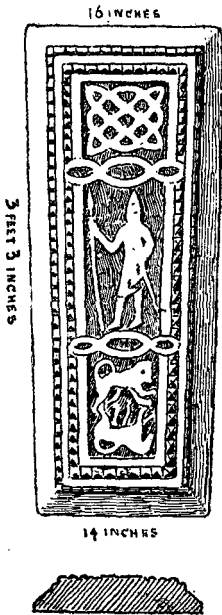


Fig. 7.

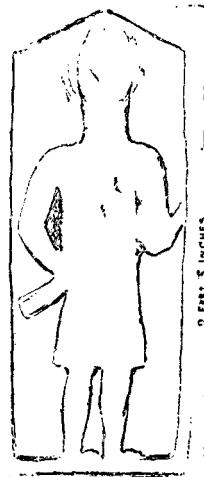


Fig. 8.

Near to these is another stone with the figure of a man in slight relief within a sunk panel (fig. 8): it is not so suggestive of an armed man as the others; the head is gone, and the rest of the figure is much defaced. The projection at his right hand is suggestive of a horn,¹ and all the rest of the stone is plain except at the foot, where on a portion of it appears, in perfectly fresh lettering, the words "1819 James M'Nicol Archallader."

¹ A hunting-horn appears in the same position in an effigy in St Mary's in Rothesay.