

III.

NOTICE OF AN ORNAMENTED STONE CUP FOUND AT BALMACAAN, GLENURQUHART. BY ANGUS GRANT, DRUMNADROCHIT.

The stone cup now to be described was found about twenty years ago in the Dalmore field of Balnacaan farm in Glenurquhart. It was lying mouth down, just beyond the reach of the plough, and nothing else was found along with it. These particulars were got from the finder, a field worker, under whose window I noticed it doing duty as a flower pot. A few years ago it was painted outside a stone colour, and with that exception, and a chip out of the base, it appears to be in its original condition. The material is evidently the close-grained and compact red-sandstone of the district, which is remarkably durable, being but little affected by even prolonged exposure to the weather.

The cup (fig. 1) consists of a bowl, stem, and base, the former two being ornamented with foliage in high relief, and the latter with a geometrical design.

The several dimensions are as follows :—The total height of the cup is $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches ; the height of the bowl alone, $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches ; of the stem, $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch ; and of the base, $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch. In diameter it measures, at the bulge of bowl, 4 inches ; the diameter of the stem is 3 inches, and of the base $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches. The cavity of the interior of the cup is hemispherical, and measures $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch, the lip being rounded off outwards to make it thinner.

The outside of the bowl, which is boldly fluted at half-inch distance,



Fig. 1. Stone Cup found at Balmacaan. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

is nearly covered with a foliageous design. This consists of a three-lobed leaf reaching to within half an inch of the top alternately with a nondescript object suggestive of a large conical flower-bud reaching to the top in a point, and having two leaves in front covering the lower half of it. The design was cut on too large a scale for the size of the cup. Of the four spaces between the tips of the four 'buds,' three measure $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches each, leaving only $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch for the fourth. In order to make a symmetrical finish, the adjacent 'buds' were so reduced in breadth that a single leaf in front of each sufficed instead of two, and the fourth

space was thus made to admit one leaf of lobe size instead of the three-lobed compound one.

The stem is quite covered with a series of two-lobed leaves of equal height, except at the finish, where three single leaves were inserted to fill up the space.

In the case of both bowl and stem the leaves are deeply divided into lobes, spatulate in outline, like the leaves of the daisy. In the three-lobed leaves the right-hand lobe is the largest, those of the stem leaves being equal.

There is a peculiarity worth noticing in the way in which the sinuses or spaces between the lobes are expressed. The left sinus in all the compound leaves is cut down to the bowl in the usual way; whereas the right, though correctly outlined, exhibits a protuberance which clearly does not belong to the leaf. These two different sinuses are alternately repeated in the bi-lobed leaves on the stem.

This protuberance, the nondescript character of the so-called 'buds,' and the peculiar treatment of one of the reduced 'buds,' suggest that the sculptor did not understand his copy. In the 'bud' referred to, seen on the left of the fig., there is a margin not covered by the single leaf in front. In order, apparently, to avoid baldness of surface, this margin is grooved radially like the edge of a shell. This has the effect of entirely destroying the resemblance to the vegetable form.

The base, which is $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch deep, and projects about a quarter inch beyond the base of the stem, is obliquely cut from the latter round the corner and down the edge of the base into ribs like the 'Milling' on the edges of our coins. The base is hollowed below, about a quarter inch deep.

The cup is higher on one side, does not appear to be anywhere quite circular, and is gibbous in outline. The workman apparently used no measurements, but was guided by eye alone. The interior of the cup shows the marks of a pointed tool. The ornamental foliage is sharply cut, and the whole design is bold and effective.