

IV.

NOTICES OF SEPULCHRAL SLABS AT KILMORE AND KILIANAN,
GLENURQUHART, INVERNESS-SHIRE. BY ANGUS GRANT, DRUM-
ALAN, DRUMNADROCHIT.

On reading in the *Scotsman* newspaper a notice of Dr Christison's paper on gravestones, I remembered having been struck several years ago with the idea that it would be a good thing to search out and put on record interesting objects in our older kirks and kirkyards. I therefore sketched what took my fancy in the neighbouring churchyards, and send herewith three sketches out of an old sketch book which may be interesting to the Society.

On looking lately at the stones represented, I found that they are now so much worn that it would be difficult to decipher the designs.

The stones represented in sketches Nos. 1 and 2 are recumbent slabs now used as grave covers in Kilmore Kirkyard, in the parish of Urquhart (Inverness); and No. 3 is of the same kind and similarly used in Kilianan Burying-ground, about five miles distant, and situated on the banks of Lochness, in Abriachan, parish of Inverness. This burying-

ground is very old, and Gaelic scholars aver that its name indicates its having been dedicated to St Adamnan. There is a tradition that these stones, and many others now lost, all originally belonged to Kilianan; but that, in the absence of any surveillance, they were taken away by anybody who chose to engage in such sacrilege. It is said that a boat loaded with sculptured stones in the course of removal from Kilianan was wrecked on Lochness, and that within living memory the stones could be seen on a clear day at the bottom of the loch.

No. 1. This stone (fig. 1) is a coarse-grained sandstone, and may be described as a recumbent grave-slab with incised designs, the chief member of which is a Latin cross on a calvary of two steps, the angles made by the transverse arms of the cross being filled in with four penannular rings, each of which encloses a star or flower. The ends of the cross limbs and of the penannular rings are finished off with a collar and fleur-de-lis. The same ornamentation appears also on the upper part of the standard or stem, thus suggesting a cross of four equal arms. As if to strengthen this suggestion, the arms inside the fleurs-de-lis are "beaded" on both edges, a feature which is absent from that part of the stem under the fleur-de-lis. This incongruity points to a probability that the top was copied by the designer from a cross of equal arms, and a stem of a different style added. To the right of the stem is a broadsword with rounded point and straight cross-guard. The sculpture is much worn.

No. 2. This slab (fig. 2) is of fine-grained compact sandstone and is sculptured in relief. It lies near the gate of the churchyard, and is being fast worn away by footsteps and weather. The design at the top or head is composed, first, of eight segments of equal and interlacing circles arranged round a central boss, the segments ending in fleurs-de-lis where the circles cut each other furthest from the central boss; second, of eight segments of smaller circles so arranged that their points of exterior intersection alternate with those of the fleurs-de-lis at the same distance from the centre, and midway between them. The design on the Kildrummy Cross figured by Stuart in his *Sculptured Stones* is of the same nature but is not so elaborate.

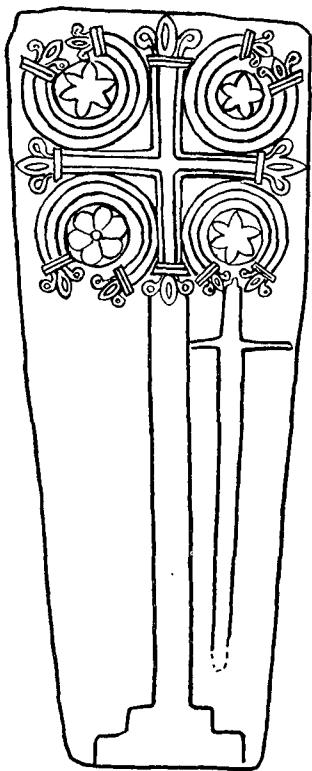


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

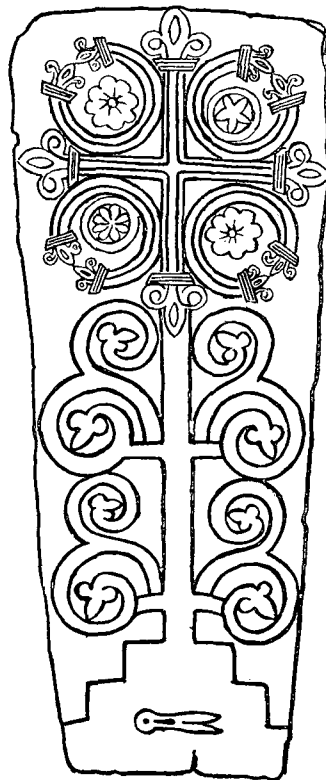


Fig. 3.

Figs. 1 and 2. Recumbent grave-slabs in Kilmore Burying-ground, Urquhart, Inverness-shire. Fig. 3. Recumbent grave-slab in the burying-ground at Kilianan, Abriachan, Inverness-shire. (From drawings by Mr Angus Grant.)

The figure at the foot is an arrangement of eight equal and interlacing circles described upon the semi-diagonals of an imaginary octagon as their diameters.

The centre of the slab is filled up with interlaced foliated scrolls, and on the right side of the stone is a broadsword with rounded point and recurved guard. It will be noted that one of the scrolls is skilfully modified on that side to make room for the sword.

No. 3. This recumbent grave-slab (fig. 3) is of a coarse-grained sandstone and incised. The upper part of the cross is almost identical with that in No. 2. The lower part of the stem, which rests on a three-stepped calvary, is, like the other, out of keeping with the head, but, unlike the other, the stem is ornamented with two sets of double spirals arranged symmetrically on each side and ending in fleurs-de-lis. The common stems of the double spirals spring inelegantly from spurs projecting from the stem of the cross. In this case there is no sword on the slab, but a pair of shears is incised on the calvary below.