

II.

THE CHURCHYARD MEMORIALS OF LASSWADE AND PENTLAND.

By ALAN REID, F.S.A. Scot.

Clerk of Eldin's drawing of the old church at Lasswade shows one of the most picturesque country fanes in the district of Edinburgh. Its



Fig. 1. The Drummond Vault, and Ancient Cross.

lofty, gabled tower was for centuries a striking feature in the vale of Esk; and its destruction by a surly November blast in 1866 was regrettable in the extreme. Only the mere fragments of pre-Reformation

walls remain ; but Messrs M'Gibbon and Ross, in vol. i. of their *Ecclesiastical Architecture*, show plans and elevations of the tower and fabric as they appeared shortly before their removal. Several important post-Reformation annexes mark the site of the ancient church. These

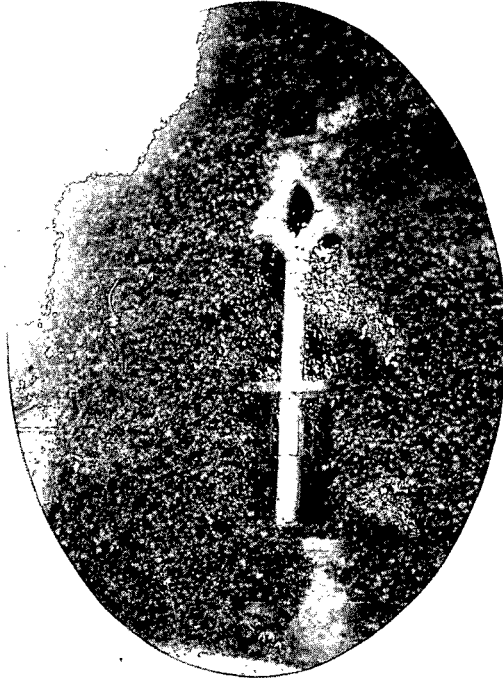


Fig. 2. Window of the Eldin Aisle.

are the Melville, Mercer, Eldin, and Drummond aisles, the latter holding all that is mortal of the Scottish Petrarch. An elaborate finial cross from the old church was placed over the Drummond vault (fig. 1) when, in 1892, the admirers of the poet restored his tomb, and added his portrait in bronze to the rose-shaded enclosure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Inscribed;—“Here Damon lies, whose songs did sometime grace  
The murmuring Esk ; may roses shade the place.”

The Eldin vault (fig. 2) shows one of the very few remaining ornamental portions of the old architecture; that is a two-light window of seventeenth-century work, though of thirteenth-century design, modified by the insertion of a transome, a common feature of the later period. This window measures 12 feet in height by 8 feet 4 inches in width, the openings being checked for glass. A vesica light occupies the spandril between the pointed arch heads of the main lights and a plain chamfer is worked round the entire fenestration.

Most important among the churchyard sculptures is the figure of a

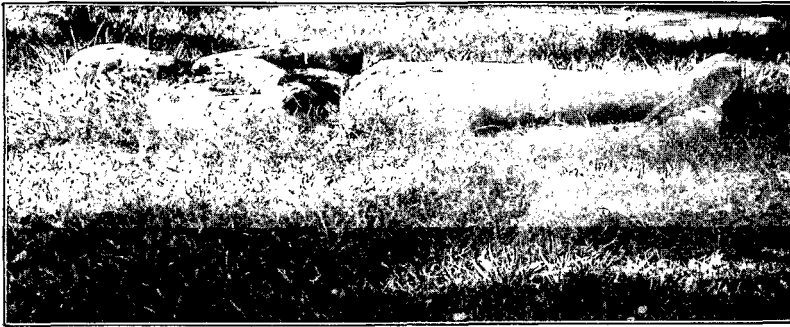


Fig. 3. A Knight in Armour.

knight in armour (fig. 3), lying within the railed enclosure belonging to a branch of the Preston family. The history of this sculpture is lost. That it once occupied an honourable position within the church is very probable, and that it represents an early Preston may not be controverted. The figure measures 6 feet in length by 22 inches in breadth at the shoulders, and seems to be clad in a close-fitting suit of chain armour. A drawing of it is also given in the *Ecclesiastical Architecture* of Messrs M'Gibbon and Ross.

One of the oldest of the slab memorials, the only specimen of its kind remaining, is a grave cover (fig. 4), apparently of early sixteenth-century workmanship. It measures 6 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet broad, is 7 inches in thickness, and shows an inscription incised within bordering

lines. A shield is incised in the centre of the upper portion of the slab, the three cross crosslets fitchy of the Bellendens, with the antlered stag's-head, being traceable on its worn surface. The inscription presents several points of much interest, and of some difficulty. The date is



Fig. 4. A Sixteenth-century Slab.

very puzzling; but if the reading "Sesqui Milles . . ." be conceded, the difficulty is resolved. The inscription reads:—"Hoc Subest Sarcophago Honesta Matrona Elisabetha Bannatin Quae Obiit Sesqui-milles . . ." etc. A contracted word or two follows, but what their purport may be is open to conjecture, if not to proof.

If a sixteenth-century date be conceded, this important slab

commemorates a member of the Lasswade Bellendens, or Bannatynes, who were related to the contemporary families of Broughton and Edinburgh. About the middle of the sixteenth century, Elizabeth Ballenden, daughter of the laird of Lasswade, was married to William, Baron Lauder.<sup>1</sup> The eldest son of this union was that "Wat o' the West Port" who fell under the fury of the Maitlands in 1598, another son being that Andrew of whom we learn that he "took flight to his mother's people at Leswaid," and thus saved himself from slaughter.

Obviously this monument cannot be associated with this Elizabeth Bannatyne, for it is older than the likely date of her death, and she would not be buried at Lasswade, but with the relics of her husband's family. The presumption, then, is strong that the *mother* of Lady Lauder was the Elizabeth Bannatyne here commemorated, and, if so, her death was later than 1550, about which time was born the celebrated William Ballenden, son of John Ballenden of Lasswade.

An entry occurring in *Fountainhall's Journal* is also of interest in its association with the Bellendens of Lasswade. His lordship says: "The mother of Andrew Lauder, my fader's fader, was Jean, otherwise Elizabeth Bellenden, daughter of the Ballendens of Lasswade, who were descended from the Ballendens of Broughton." It is unfortunate that the journalist did not go a step further back, and tell us the name of his fader's fader's mother's mother. Doubtless she was the honourable matron, Elisabeth Bannatine, of the sarcophagus, whose son, William Bellenden, in all probability framed the unique legend in his mother's honour.

A very interesting small stone (fig. 5), 24 by 20 inches, shows emblems of the tailor's calling, scissors, goose, and bodkin, with a skull and single bone surmounted by an incised "Memento Mori," and the initials of the tailor and his wife. The inscription appears on the obverse, and is, like the emblems, graven within a cavetto-framed panel. It reads:—  
Here lyes George Bwier Tailor in Lasswade, and Isabell Pache his

<sup>1</sup> See the tombstone at Lauder.

Spous. They died in — 1660." A mutilated, winged cherub appears under the inscription.

A pretty large slab, now leaning against the northern wall, is rich in varied devices. It commemorates the miner who first opened coal-pits



Fig. 5. A Tailor's Memorial.

in the district, but, unfortunately, his name and period are undecipherable. The back shows on the upper portion a winged cherub head; a shield with crossed picks and shovel; the legend, "By these I lived"; a skull; a single bone, and the familiar "Memento Mori." The front (fig. 6) shows a design of exceptional interest. A couple of miners are taking levels, a compass indicating clearly the nature of their business.

A plummet hangs from the hand of the standing figure, miners' picks, a spade, and a wedge completing the design. Fluted pilasters support the whole, the panel between them bearing an inscription so worn that only its rhyming conclusion is legible :—

“God keeps his own within the grave  
 In safe repose to lie  
 The shade of sin is past and gone  
 And glory decks the sky.”



Fig. 6. A Miner's Memorial.  
 (5 feet by 38 inches by 9 inches in thickness.)

The burial-place of John Wilson, gardener, who died in 1733, is marked by a remarkably heavy and richly decorated stone. It measures 4 feet by 33 inches, and is 12 inches in thickness, both sides bearing a variety of symbols, but none of a secular nature. That facing the west is shown in the illustration (fig. 7). Here the “Memento Mori” legend appears on a scroll over the main portion of the design, which is formed

of a skull, cross-bones, crossed arrows and scythes, and a sand-glass, a very effective and well-disposed combination. A finely cut drapery



Fig. 7. Emblems of Mortality.

frames a blank panel, the inscription being on the east side, and surmounted by an excellent specimen of the winged cherub.

Even richer in detail, though of cruder design and workmanship, is the memorial of "Jain Laidlaw · Spous · To · Thomas · Train · In · Laswad · Who · Dyed · May · Ye · 13 · 1739 · Hir · Age · 49."



The east side shows compasses, plummets, a square and a heart, two circular-headed panels bearing the inscription, and the rhyme:—

“Hear layes a loving wife and mother kind,  
 A frind to all in honesty of mind ;  
 But ah strong Death, that hero, hath her bound  
 Into the Grave, till the last trumpet sound.”

The west side of this elaborate slab is shown in the illustration (fig. 8).

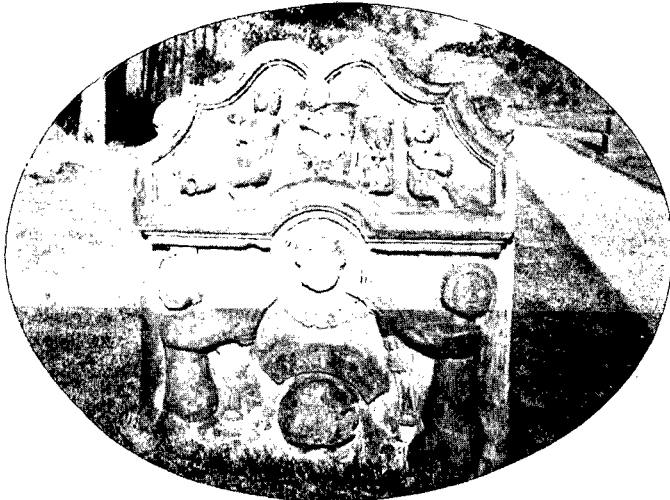


Fig. 8. A Figure Subject.  
 (48 inches by 40 inches exposed.)

The upper portion shows a skull, a sand-glass, a figure of Death with a scythe, and a couple of cherubs which resemble the bubble-blower shown in fig. 10. The bust of a woman occupies the centre of the lower portion. This terminates in the Memento Mori scroll, and the usual emblems of mortality. Two cherubs are represented robbing the figure in a garment, which is grasped by the hands of all three. There is also the suggestion of a nimbus round the head of the bust, the whole design being rich in symbolic meaning, and good in effect.

Somewhat crude both in design and execution, but very graphic in its delineation, is the memorial of another gardener, shown in fig. 9. The moulded pediment bears the mortal emblems common to the site, an

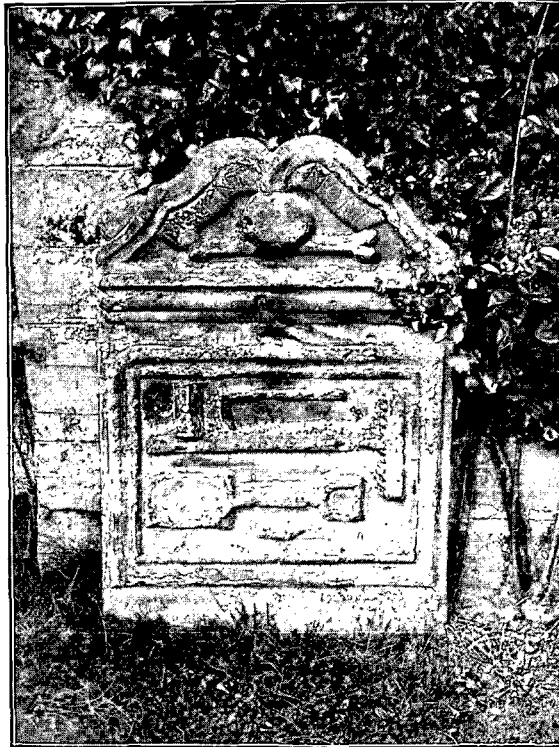


Fig. 9. A Gardener's Memorial.  
(50 inches by 34 inches.)

oblong panel underneath showing the boldly carved implements of gardening. These are a hoe, a rake, a spade, and a knife ; an hour-glass, indicating, presumably, that the time for using these has run.

An extremely massive and very interesting monument now fills the space of an ancient doorway at the south-west angle of the old church.

The worn, chamfered corner of this old wall-opening appears in the illustration (fig. 10), as does also the edge of the slab shown in fig. 4. The floriated pediment of this fine stone shows a cherub figure holding

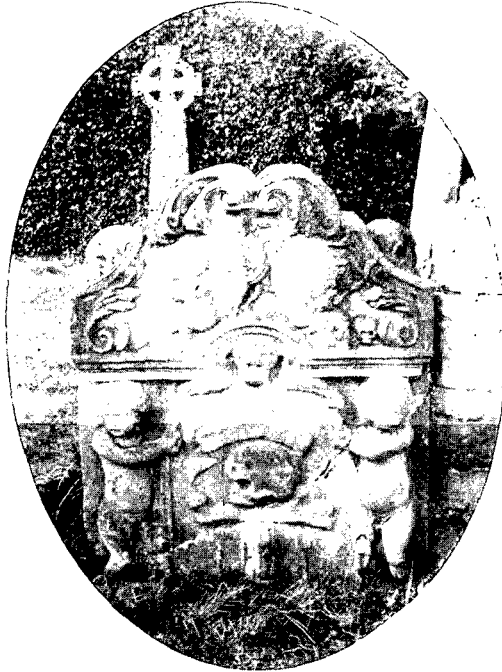


Fig. 10. Life symbolised by Bubble-blowing.  
(48 inches by 39 inches by 14 inches.)

a basin around which soap-bubbles are floating ; in the centre, a figure of Death with a scythe ; and, to the right, a female figure, bent in pose, and evidently mourning. The panel underneath shows an artistic disposition of the mortal emblems, the design appearing on a draped ground, the folds of which are held by a couple of really fine cherubs, and surmounted by a winged cherub head. The obverse side is equally

elaborate, the design being supported by finely cut Corinthian pillars, and showing the date 1718.



Fig. 11. The Umpherstone Memorials.

#### PENTLAND.

The founder of Roslin Chapel endowed it with "the church lands of Pentland, four acres of meadow near that town, with the kips, and eight sowmes of grass." The parish was suppressed after the Reformation, its eastern and western divisions merging into the contiguous parishes

of Lasswade and Glencorse. No trace of the ancient church is left, but its yew-enclosed burying-ground is still used for interments ; and is, with the quaint, old-world village, lying under the shadow of the great " bings " of Straiton Oil Works, well worthy of the attention of city pedestrians, few



Fig. 12. Front of the Currie Stone.

of whom seem to know even of their existence. The ground is dominated by the stately tomb of the Gibsons, Baronets of Pentland, and their successors, and is carefully tended. The older monuments have been collected, and now form a picturesque group near the classic mausoleum. They date from 1624 onwards, and exhibit excellent specimens of the emblematic sculptures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The illustration (fig. 11) shows a couple of these old memorials. That in the foreground is dated 1681, and commemorates Charles Umpherstone,<sup>1</sup> tenant in Pentland. Serpents are graven on the pilasters, the sides are panelled, the mouldings and design are very effective, and the whole is

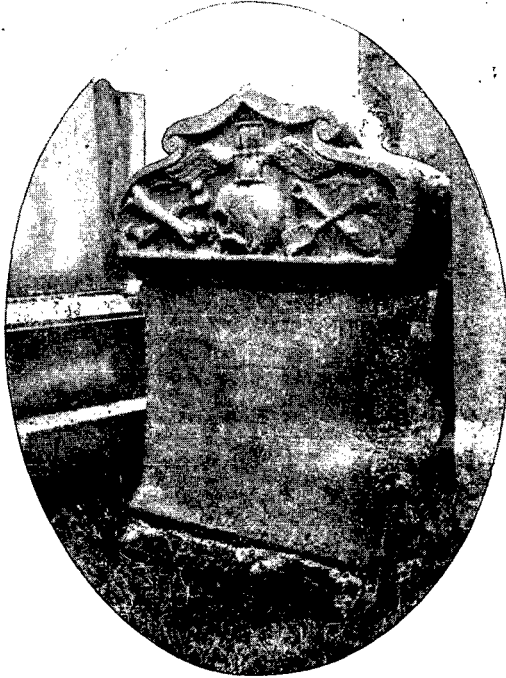


Fig. 13. Back of the Currie Stone.

well preserved. The stone in the background is more elaborate, and shows a picturesque assortment of the common emblems of mortality, a coulter and spade denoting the calling of the deceased, Robert Umpherstone, who died in 1624.

<sup>1</sup> This was the first husband of Helen Alexander, who in 1687 married James Currie. See *Passages in the Lives of Helen Alexander and James Currie of Pentland*, Belfast, 1869.

The stone commemorating James Currie<sup>1</sup> and his wife, Helen Alexander, of *Children's Covenant* celebrity, is also interesting and meritorious. The front (fig. 12) shows a winged cherub head, surrounded by elaborate floriation, a shield with initials, and cornucopiæ appearing in the intricate design. Underneath is a long obituary, incised on a drapery, and supported by a couple of graceful pillars of an enriched Ionic type.

The back of the same stone is shown in the illustration (fig. 13). The contrast between the severe simplicity of this design, and the elaboration already noted, is very marked. A lengthy rhyme fills the lower portion, the pediment bearing the symbolism, which includes the Memento Mori text, a winged hour-glass, cross-bones superimposed on a scythe, and crossed spade and shovel superimposed on a miner's pick. All the carving and lettering on this slab, which dates, probably, from 1706, are literally as fresh and readable as when newly cut. The rhyming epitaph, also, is quaint and pleasing and worthy of record :—

Stay, Passenger, a word or two with thee,  
 Death strikes the young as well as old we see ;  
 His reliques here ly in this dormitory  
 Whose soul, we trust, now sings his master's glory ;  
 This hope doth make his friends from grief refrain ;  
 That soul and body shall unite again ;  
 No more to sin, no more to sigh or dy,  
 But live and sing God's praise eternally.

Perhaps the most interesting relic associated with Pentland is the massive and ancient slab (fig. 14) lying under the dark yews, close to the south side of the mausoleum. Five feet 5 inches in length, 17 inches broad, and 10 inches in thickness, with a floriated cross of mediæval design covering its outer surface, it is rather remarkable that this memento of the past has escaped attention so long. The cross-head

<sup>1</sup> The Martyrs' Monument in Greyfriars' Churchyard bears that it "was first erected by James Currie, merchant in Pentland, and others. 1706." The stone shown in figs. 12 and 13 commemorates the four infant sons of James Currie and Helen Alexander, the last of whom died in 1706. As is shown on the edges of the stone, James Currie died in 1736, his wife having predeceased him by seventeen years.

is clearly shown in the photograph ; but, unfortunately, the base proved less amenable to the wiles of the camera, so densely shrouded was it in



Fig. 14. The Pentland Cross Slab.  
(A portion of an ancient font appears over the slab.)

umbrageous shadow. As it is of an unusual type, a slight drawing was made of its outlines (fig. 15).

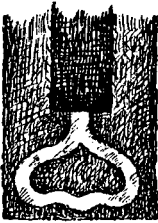


Fig. 15. Base of the  
Cross.

Unfortunately, again, vandalism has worked havoc with the stem of the cross, mutilating its fair proportions in order to utilise the slab as the base of an ordinary tombstone. A long, deep, and wide slot has cleared entirely away the whole central portion of the stem, and any adornment or elaboration of line that it may have borne has utterly perished. But, even with this drawback, the Pentland cross has much to commend it of grace and beauty, and it is pleasing to have a pictorial record of its more important features.



It is necessary, also, to remember that this old churchyard contains further examples of these interesting sculptured crosses. In the fourteenth volume of the Society's *Proceedings*, p. 49, there is a paper by Mr Thomas Arnold which describes and illustrates the two grave-slabs of which the figures are here repeated (fig. 16), dating from the middle period of Scottish Gothic art, say about the beginning of the fourteenth century. These memorials were discovered under the matted turf of

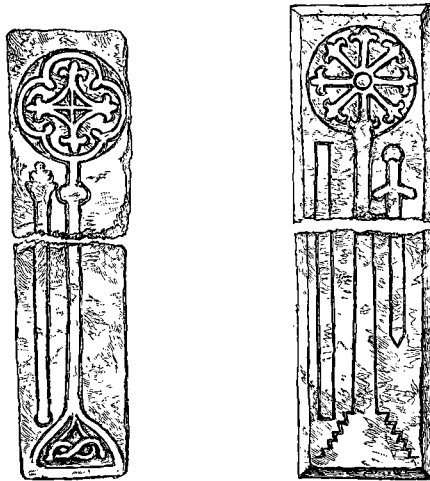


Fig. 16. Two Grave Slabs, Pentland.

that portion of the ground which Mr Arnold regarded as the site of the chancel of the old church. After sketching the relics, their discoverers restored the grassy covering, where, in all probability, the memorials remain in safe obscurity. From Mr Arnold's sketches, here reproduced, it will be seen that the base of the cross on the left follows the lines of the cross now above ground, their upper portions or heads, showing much greater divergence of form. Mr Arnold further observes that the cross on the right of the sketch is almost identical with that appearing on a slab in St Mary's, Culross; and his short paper concludes with the

query, what "mighty men of old" are commemorated by these graven stones?

The end supports, and one of the central supports of a table stone, which has disappeared, are extremely interesting. The edges of these slabs show four finely cut figures—a sower, a reaper, an eater, and a flower-gatherer, the latter having roses entwined around his body. One

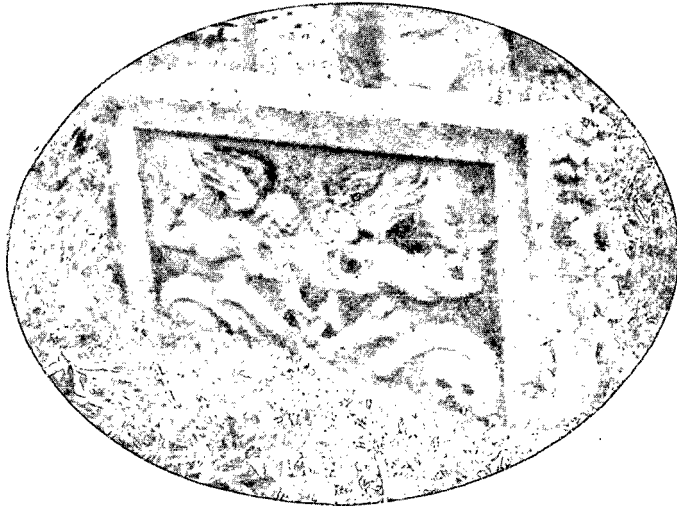


Fig. 17. Musical Cherubs.

of the central panels (fig. 17) represents very clearly a couple of winged and flying cherubs blowing trumpets, a favourite Resurrection symbol. What is not so commonly seen is the delineation of *sound*, which is here represented as a *solid body*, issuing from the trumpets, and mingling with the emblems of mortality beneath—a picturesque grouping of skulls and cross-bones, and the Memento Mori scroll.

The last photograph shows another remarkable panel (fig. 18), as also the decorated side of the remaining central support. The panel design is unique. Here stands the grim King of Terrors, crowned and armed

with a long spear, and ready to attack a trio of victims—a youth, a seated female, and the baby on her knee. The youth is vigorously interposing between Death and his prey, but all in vain, as is indicated by the Latin motto which tells that the tyrant is no respecter of persons



Fig. 18. The King of Terrors.

or conditions. The Covenantee minister of Loanhead, Mr John M'Neil, his wife Beatrix Umpherston, and Mr Charles Umpherston, surgeon in Pentland, are also buried within this sacred enclosure; but their memorials present no features of interest beyond their association with those who bore a stalwart part in the Covenantee struggle.