

V.

NOTES ON SOME SCULPTURED SLABS AND HEADSTONES IN THE CHURCHYARDS OF GLENCONVINTH AND KIRKHILL, INVERNESS-SHIRE. BY THOMAS WALLACE, F.S.A. Scot.

Convinth Churchyard.—This ancient Highland burial-place is situated about 6 miles west of Beauly, on the road leading from Tomnacross to Glenurquhart.

The ruins of the old chapel still remain, but its history is very fragmentary.

Convinth, or Conway, was a parish in 1221, and Kiltarlity was formed out of it in 1226. In 1258 the patronage was vested in John Bysset, the younger of Lovat.

Between 1258 and 1274 it had been granted to the monks of Beauly, who had endowed a vicar with a stipend of $5\frac{1}{2}$ merks.

The church was dedicated to St Lawrence. Alexander Fuay was vicar in 1480, who was succeeded by Sir Donald Walter in 1493.

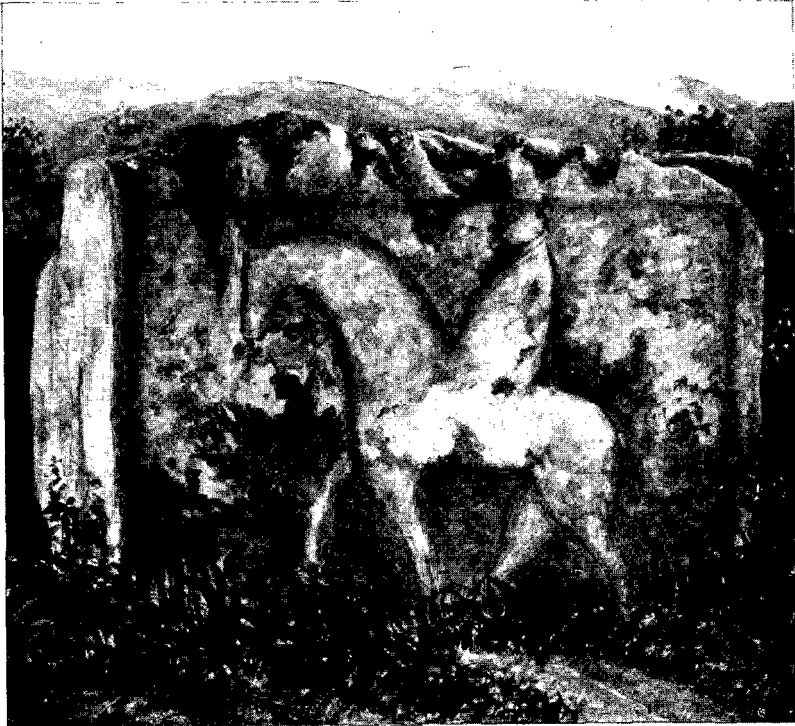
In 1576 Mr John Fraser, prior of Beauly, leased the corn tithes and the vicarage teinds of Convinth to Simon Fraser of Lovat (then four years old), at the rent of "80 merks for his and his heirs lives, and for 19 years after."

The stone No. 1 shows a rider on horseback, sculptured in low relief within a rectangular border, in rather an archaic style, suggestive of the similar figures so common on the sculptured stones of the period of the early Celtic Church.

No. 2 resembles the demi-effigies not uncommon in England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but excessively rare in Scotland.

No. 3 is an ornate recumbent slab with a central cross, having a circular head at either end of the shaft, the space on one side

of the shaft being filled by a scrollwork pattern, and on the other by a sword, a comb and shears, and a number of small circular rosettes.



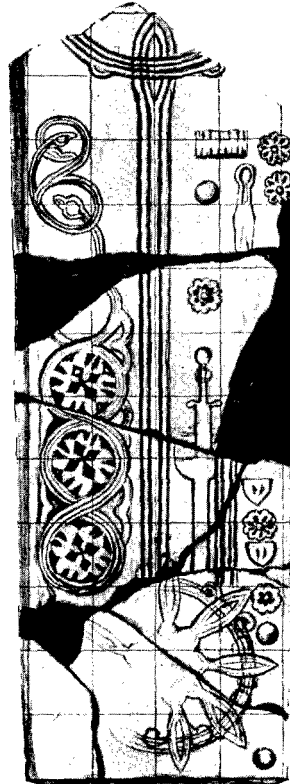
No. 1. At Convinth.

Nos. 4 and 5 are cup-marked stones. No. 4 has two cups, one being $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and $\frac{3}{10}$ inch in depth, and the other 1 inch in diameter and slightly less in depth than the other. No. 5 has four cups, all more or less oval in circumference, the largest measuring 3 inches in its largest diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in depth, the others

smaller, the smallest being $1\frac{1}{5}$ inches in its longer diameter and $\frac{1}{5}$ inch in depth.



No. 2. At Convinth.

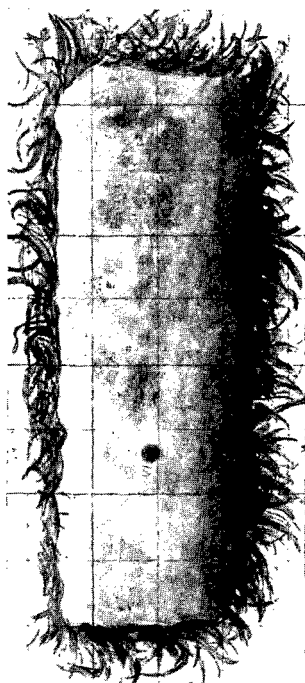


No. 3. At Convinth.

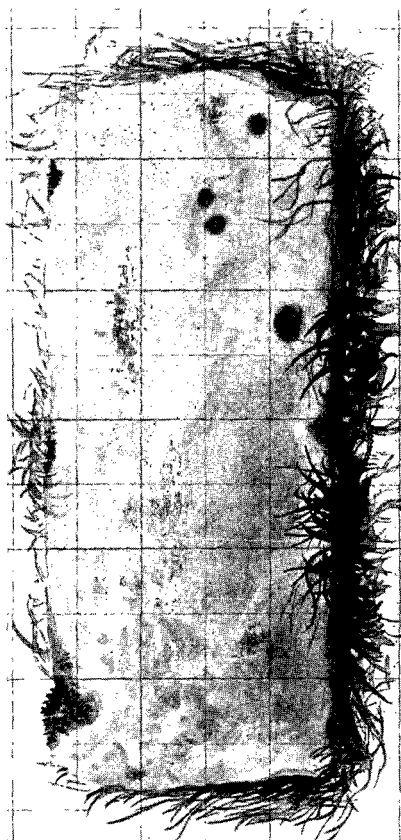
Kirkhill Churchyard.—Kirkhill consists of two united parishes, Wardlaw and Farnua, which were united in 1618.

The church of Wardlaw originally stood at Dunballoch, near Beaully Bridge, from which it was removed by a bull from the Pope in 1220. The gable of the church of that date at Kirkhill is still

to be seen against the west gable of the mortuary chapel which was built in 1722.

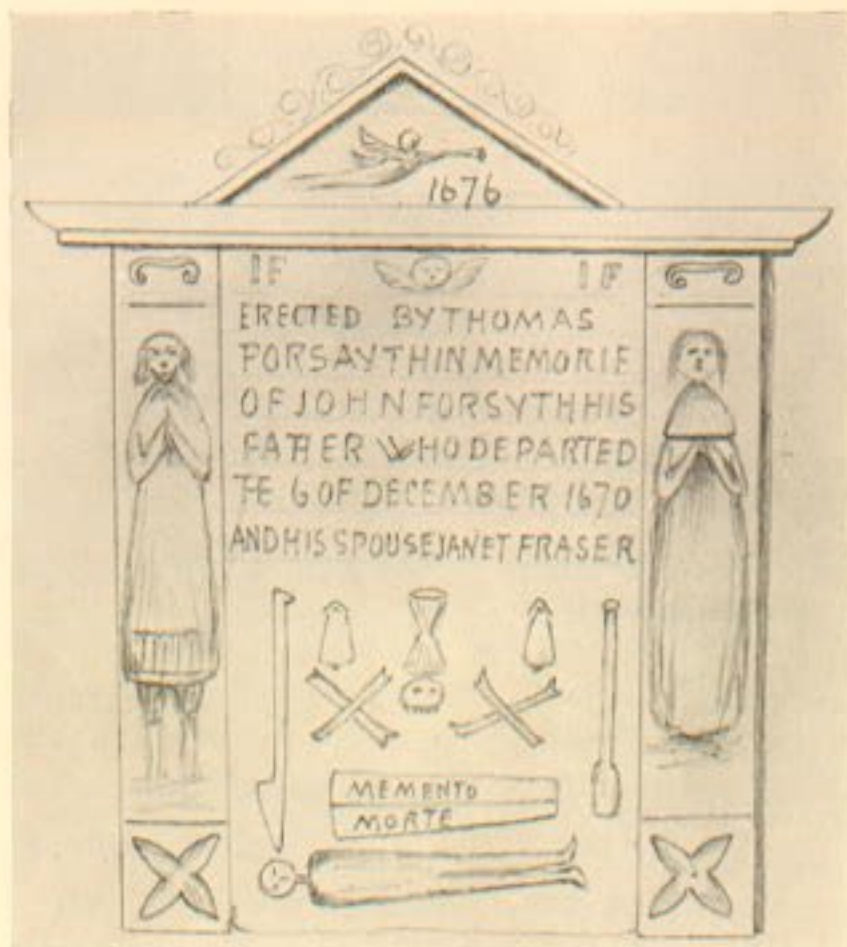
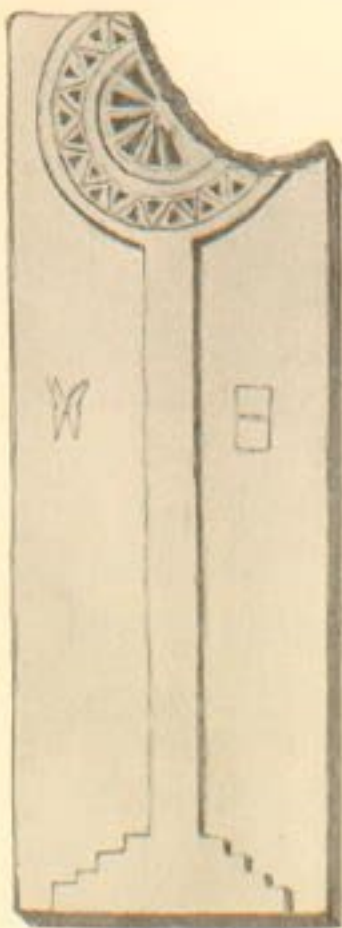


No. 4. At Convinth.



No. 5. At Convinth.

The site of the church at Dunballoch still exists, but without a trace of grave or tombstone. Local tradition says that the grave-stones were carried from Dunballoch to Kirkhill.



Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9. At Kirkhill.

The church of Farnua stood at Kirkton, Bunchrew, where there are still the remains of the churchyard with several old stones.

The site of the church at Kirkhill is called "Wardlaw," which bears its own meaning. The Gaelic name is "Knock Mhurie," "Mary's Hill," or, according to some, the "Hill of St Maurice," who was said to be the patron saint of the parish. It is generally thought, however, that the saint was "Mary."

The accompanying sketches are of stones from Kirkhill churchyard.

No. 6, which is the earliest of the four, is a recumbent grave-slab 6 feet in length, bearing in the centre a cross sculptured in low relief, with a wheel-head ornamented with a geometric pattern of incuse triangles, the shaft rising from a calvary base of four steps. In the space on one side of the shaft, about a third of its length from the top, is a symbol resembling a pair of shears, and on the other side a book.

No. 7 is a monument of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and is interesting from its mixture of classic design and crude symbolism, the quaint caryatides on the pillars supporting the pediment exhibiting the costumes of a woman and girl of the period.

No. 8 is an example undated, but obviously of about the same period, and less remarkable for the number and crudeness of its emblems of mortality. Perhaps the book, an unusual symbol, may signify the office of reader or schoolmaster.

No. 9 is another example of almost the same date, shows the kirk-officer of Wardlaw, Andrew M'Robbie, with the deid-bell in his right hand, and holding up to view, in his left hand, a human skull to enforce the motto and emblems of mortality below. The figure is such a quaint representation of the man and his costume that reference is made to the illustration from a rubbing, given by Mr Rae Macdonald, in the *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvi. p. 721.