

II.

SOME OLD CROSSES AND UNLETTERED SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS IN ABERDEENSHIRE. BY JAMES RITCHIE, F.E.I.S., CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT.

In some of the old churchyards in Aberdeenshire there are to be seen stones of small size on which are inscribed crosses of somewhat unusual shape and archaic design. They are few in number and insignificant, and, as they often lie in out-of-the-way corners, are not likely to attract the notice of the casual visitor.

DYCE.

There are four crosses, all different in form, to be seen in the old churchyard of Dyce, which lies about 2 miles distant from Dyce Station on the main line of the Great North of Scotland Railway, and about 8 miles from Aberdeen. The old church of Dyce was dedicated to St Fergus, and dated from pre-Reformation times. Though now in a ruinous condition it was in use till 1872, when a new church was erected on a site in the neighbourhood, but a little nearer the village. In a recess in the eastern gable of the old church are preserved the two well-known symbol stones, one of which has incised upon its face what are usually known as the "spectacle" and "elephant" symbols, while the other has a beautiful cross of raised inter-

laced work, round which are carved, also in relief, several of the familiar symbols found on incised stones.

Dyce No. 1 of fig. 1.—This is a small cross on a stone which measures 1 foot 3 inches in height, 10 inches in breadth, and 4 inches in thickness. The cross itself is rudely formed by two incised lines, intersecting at the centre, and appears to have been originally 10 inches in length and the same in breadth, though, owing to the mutilation of the stone, the upright line is only 9 inches long and the horizontal one 8 inches. The intersection of the cross is enclosed by an incised square, with sides measuring 5 inches in length, drawn parallel to the lines forming the cross. In the centre of each of the four small squares thus formed, and opposite the angles of the cross, is a small circular hollow about 1 inch in diameter, not unlike a shallow cup-mark.

Dyce No. 2 of fig. 1.—The stone on which this cross is incised measures 2 feet 4 inches in height, 1 foot 5 inches in breadth, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness. The arms of the cross are equal in length and are about 1 inch broad, though slightly wider at the ends; and the cross itself measures 7 inches from top to bottom, and the same distance from side to side. Across the intersection of the arms there is carved a figure shaped somewhat like a square, although it is slightly longer one way than the other, being 2 inches in length and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in breadth. The corners also are slightly rounded, as if formed by four circular hollows. Thus far, No. 2 is not unlike No. 1 in general design, though it is far more carefully formed; but, in addition, it is surrounded by a circle $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, which passes through the centres of four smaller circles, each $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. These small circles are placed opposite the angles made by the intersection of the arms of the cross, in the same position as the hollows in No. 1.

Dyce No. 3 of fig. 1.—This is the largest, the most simple, and perhaps the most modern of the Dyce crosses. The stone on which

it is incised is 2 feet 11 inches high, 1 foot 10 inches broad, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. The cross is formed by an incised line about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide which forms the outline of the shaft and arms of the cross, but the ends of which are not joined at the foot. The shaft of the cross is 11 inches long, and the horizontal portion forming the arms measures



Fig. 1. Stones with incised Crosses at Dyce (Nos. 1, 2, 3).

$9\frac{1}{2}$ inches from end to end. Both the shaft and the arms of the cross are $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide.

Dyce No. 4.—This is a small reddish-coloured sandstone, 12 inches high, 6 inches broad, and 2 inches thick. Upon it is inscribed a cross of peculiar form (fig. 2), 6 inches high and 4 inches wide. The carved lines of which it is formed are about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. It is like a patriarchal cross, having two pairs of arms, those at the top

of the shaft bending slightly downwards. The second pair is placed a little above the middle of the shaft. Each arm of the second pair



Fig. 2. Cross of peculiar form at Dyce (No. 4).

has a line about 2 inches long, pointing downwards at right angles to the end of the arm, that on the right side being very faint, and looking

as if it had been trimmed off, by accident or otherwise. At the bottom of the shaft there are two figures like steps, one on each side, but they are carelessly drawn and are not very symmetrical. Near the angles formed by the lower arms and the shaft there are four hollows, somewhat similar to those on No. 3, but more deeply cut. The lower one on the left side is elongated, and almost joined to the extremity of the line which bends downwards from the end of the arm on that side. Just above the arms at the upper part of the cross two other circular hollows are placed, making six in all.

The whole figure is roughly carved, and, as the stone on which it is cut does not appear to be of a very hard nature, perhaps it has received damage while lying about in the churchyard. In general appearance the figure is not unlike an anchor turned upside down.

All those four stones have been accidentally discovered at various times by the gravedigger while he has been turning over soil in the churchyard. They lay for a considerable time loosely at the bottom of the recess in the east gable in which the sculptured stones, already referred to, were protected, but they have recently been built into the walls there, and are now safe from loss or destruction. It is fortunate, however, that the three crosses shown in fig. 1 were photographed before they were built into the recess, for they are now in such a position that it would be very difficult to obtain satisfactory photographs of them.

ST MEDAN'S CHURCHYARD.

On the opposite side of the river Don, within sight of the old churchyard of Dyce, but about half a mile further up the river, stand the ruins of the old church of St Medan. A church, dedicated to the saint whose name it bears, occupied the site in early Christian times, and the present building, now ivy-covered and roofless, was in use till 1703, when a new church was erected at Hatton of Fintray, a more convenient centre for the worshippers. There is a tradition

in the district that one of the parish church communion cups was formed out of a silver image or shrine of the head of St Medan, which it was customary to carry round the parish in procession during bad seasons, so that the weather might be rendered more propitious for the farming community. There are several old grave-stones in the churchyard which surrounds the ancient building, and four of these are of the class described in this paper. They are placed not far from the walk in the south side of the churchyard, between it and the ruined church, but much nearer to the walk than to the church.

St Medan's No. 1 (fig. 3).—The smallest one, a simple Latin cross, stands near the east end of this walk. It has been cut out of a slab of granite, smoothed on one side, but rough on the other. The shaft of the cross is 18 inches in height, and it varies from 6 to 7 inches in width, while the portion which rises above the arms is 3 inches high. The arms measure 12 inches in length from end to end, and they are 6 inches broad. The cross is about 2 inches thick, and has no lettering or carving of any kind upon it.

St Medan's No. 2 (fig. 4).—About 6 feet further west, in the same line, stands the second stone. It is a block of grey granite rising 3 feet above the ground, and is 1 foot 6 inches broad and from 6 to 7 inches thick. The face of the stone has been smoothed, but the back, though trimmed, is still somewhat rough, and is convex from side to side. On the upper portion of the face of the stone, towards the left side, is carved a sword, 1 foot 5 inches long and 4 inches across at the broadest part, just below the handle. Rather lower down on the right side is incised a cross potent, measuring $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches from top to bottom and 12 inches from side to side. The cross pieces forming the T at the ends of the arms are 4 inches long. The carved line is about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep.

An unusual feature is that, while the carving of the sword is raised above the surface of the stone, that of the cross is sunk below

it. Both figures, however, seem to be part of one original design, for they are carved with equal care, and balance each other on the face



Fig. 3. Cross at St Medan's (No. 1).

of the stone, while there is no trace of any other figure having been obliterated to make room for either of them.

St Medan's No. 3 (fig. 5).—The third stone lies flat on the ground a few yards further to the west. It is a rough block of grey granite, partially smoothed on the surface, which is slightly convex from side

to side, and it appears to have been used as a flat stone covering over a grave. It measures 5 feet 9 inches long and 1 foot 6 inches broad,



Fig. 4. Stone with Sword in relief and Cross incised, at St Medan's (No. 2).

and the outline is somewhat irregular. Ten inches from the western or upper end of the stone is incised a circle 9 inches across, having two diametrical lines crossing each other at right angles. A kind of cross enclosed within a circle is thus formed. At the points where the diame-

ters meet the circumference of the circle are drawn figures, cone-shaped, with the sides slightly convex, measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.

A little below this figure, towards the left side of the stone, there is a rectangle 10 inches long and 6 inches broad, with a line drawn down the middle from end to end, and two lines crossing it from side to side, one being 4 inches from the upper end, the other 3 inches



Fig. 5. Recumbent Slab with Symbols at St Medan's (No. 3).

from the lower end. The figure is thus divided into six smaller rectangles, four of them being squares of 3 inches along the side, the other two measuring 4 inches long by 3 inches broad. To the right of the rectangle is carved a pair of shears, somewhat like those used in sheep-shearing, 10 inches long and 4 inches broad at the widest part.

Below these two symbols there is another circular figure, formed like the one at the upper end of the stone, but slightly larger. It is 11 inches in diameter, and the cusps which stand out from the circumference at the ends of the diameters are 3 inches long. In the illustration (fig. 5) this figure does not appear quite circular, but this is

owing to the foreshortening caused by its being carved on a slightly hollowed part of the stone.

It is doubtful whether the two circular figures on this stone are intended for crosses or for emblems. If the rectangle represents a bale of wool (which is also open to doubt), then it and the shears would seem to indicate the burial-place of someone connected with the wool-mill which has existed in the immediate neighbourhood of the church-yard for a long time. It is quite possible, therefore, that the other



Fig. 6. Recumbent Grave-slab with Sword and Crosses at St Medan's (No. 4).

figures may also be intended to represent something associated with the woollen trade, though, in that case, I have been unable to ascertain for what they stand.

St Medan's No. 4 (fig. 6).—The fourth stone is also a flat one, apparently used as a grave cover, and lies on the surface of the ground a few yards further west than No. 3. It is of coarse-grained granite and has a very rough surface, on which the designs do not show to advantage. The stone itself is 3 feet 6 inches long and 1 foot 3 inches at its greatest breadth, near the middle, whence it tapers slightly to each

end. In the centre, along its length, is incised a sword, 1 foot 6 inches long, with a reversed guard measuring 7 inches across from end to end. The blade, in addition to the lines forming its edges, has a third line down its centre. Near each end of the stone is incised a cross potent, the one below the point of the sword being 7 inches in breadth and the same in length, with cross-pieces $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long at the ends of the arms. The upper portion of the cross, however, extends about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch beyond the cross line, forming a crosslet at this point. The cross at the upper end of the stone is slightly smaller than the one at the lower end, being only 6 inches in length and breadth, with cross-pieces $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

The carving of this cross is somewhat faint and indistinct, probably owing to its having suffered from long exposure to the weather. The designs on this stone are similar to those on No. 2, two crosses taking the place of one, but the symbols are much more roughly executed, and all three are incised.

INVERURIE.

The churchyard of Inverurie lies at the foot of the Bass, about 16 miles from Aberdeen, and fully half a mile south of Inverurie railway station. The parish church — a small heather-thatched building—formerly stood near the north-west corner of the churchyard, but it was removed in 1775, and no traces of this ancient building now remain above ground, although, while graves are being dug near its site, portions of the foundations are still sometimes unearthed.

Like the churchyard of Dyce, that of Inverurie has also its complement of sculptured stones, there being four, two whole and two broken, standing near each other at the junction of the old churchyard with the new cemetery. It has also two small crosses.

Inverurie Nos. 1 and 2 (fig. 7).—The smaller of these two crosses has lain from time immemorial about the churchyard, and its original

position is therefore not now known. The larger one was found many years ago when a grave was being dug in the burial-place belonging to the Johnstons of Brandsbutt, and is now placed at the head of their ground, within the iron railing which surrounds it. Both of the crosses have been formed on the same plan. In each case the block of granite has been trimmed into a circular form with rounded edges,



Fig. 7. Crosses at Inverurie Churchyard (Nos. 1 and 2).

and with a projecting triangular portion at the foot for fixing it into the ground. The crosses are of the equal-armed pattern, and are incised on the stones on both sides, so that each stone bears practically two crosses, one on the front and one on the back, the lines of both running into each other round the edges. There is therefore no difference in appearance between the front and the back of the stones.

The smaller stone is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches

thick. The carving of the cross is sunk to a depth of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch both on front and back, but it is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep at the edges of the stone, where the pattern turns round from front to back. The pointed portion at the foot of the cross has been almost completely broken off, only a small portion remaining, sufficient to show that it had once existed.

The larger cross is complete, the circular portion being 12 inches in diameter, while the triangular portion at the bottom is 6 inches broad and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, making the stone altogether $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. It is 5 inches in thickness. The carving of the cross is sunk to a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch on front and back, while at the edges, where back and front designs meet, it is about 1 inch deep.

As has already been mentioned, this larger cross was found in the burial-place of the Johnstons of Brandsbutt, a farm on the north-west border of the burgh of Inverurie. It is interesting to know that on this farm once stood a stone circle, close to the site of which is the Brandsbutt Stone, with the "Serpent" and the "Crescent and Sceptre" symbols, and an ogham inscription, described and figured in *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, p. 506.

A small cross, somewhat similar in appearance to these Inverurie examples, is said to have stood in the old churchyard of Logie Elphinstone, but it has now disappeared; and though the churchyard has been several times examined, no trace of it can be found.

Inverurie No. 3 (fig. 8).—Built into the northern wall of the hall belonging to the St Anthony Lodge of Freemasons, in the High Street of Inverurie, is a stone with an incised cross on its face. The stone is elliptical in shape, 19 inches high and 16 inches broad; and these dimensions also represent those of the cross, the arms of which reach to the edges of the stone. The carving is not so deep or so regular as that on Nos. 1 and 2, so that the cross does not present so striking an appearance as those in the churchyard.

The stone is not in its original position. It was built into the wall

when the hall was erected in 1881, whither it had been removed from an old house which formerly stood near the southern end of Inverurie, where Cunning Hill Road meets the High Street. This building had been used for some time as a Dissenting chapel, and subsequently as a meeting-place for the local Freemasons' lodge. Afterwards it



Fig. 8. Cross at Freemasons' Hall, Inverurie (No. 3).

fell into decay; and when the Freemasons' hall at present in use was in course of erection, the proprietor, Mr Bruce, kindly gave the Freemasons permission to remove the stone, and to build it into their new hall as a memento of the old building in which their predecessors had long ago met. Whether the cross had been carved for the purpose of being placed in the old chapel, or whether it had been removed from a still older building, cannot be ascertained.

MONYMSK.

There has been a Christian community at Monymusk from very early times. The Culdees are said to have had there a station from which missionaries carried the gospel to surrounding districts. The famous reliquary, the "Breachbannoch," still preserved at Monymusk House, is doubtless a relic of those days. Afterwards a priory took the place of the earlier foundation, and this in turn was succeeded by the parish church. In these circumstances one would naturally expect that the Monymusk churchyard would contain a number of those early Christian monuments whose symbols have so puzzled the most diligent investigators. Only one exists in the locality, however, and it is not in the churchyard. It used to lie near the roadside at the farm of Nether Mains, but is now safely preserved at Monymusk House.

Monymusk No. 1 (fig. 9).—There is, however, a small cross in the churchyard, not far from the gate leading through the boundary wall into the manse garden. Owing to its small size and slight elevation above ground this cross is rather difficult to find, but one may reach it by stepping sixteen paces eastward along the side of the wall, beginning at the garden gate, and then ten paces at right angles to the wall. This will bring the searcher in front of the cross.

The stone, on the face of which the cross is cut, is firmly fixed in the ground, above which it stands to a height of 9 inches. Its breadth is 11 inches and its thickness 4 inches. The cross is of the equal-armed form, and measures 6 inches from top to bottom, and the same distance from side to side. The incisions which form the cross are $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, but the arms expand at the ends, each to a width of 1 inch. This cross, therefore, is not unlike the central portion of the cross with circles round it at Dyce (No. 2), but it lacks the incision at the intersection of the arms which occurs on the Dyce example (*cf.* fig. 1).

Monymusk No. 2 (fig. 10).—On the pavement below the tower of Monymusk church, and to the right of the outside of the doorway opening

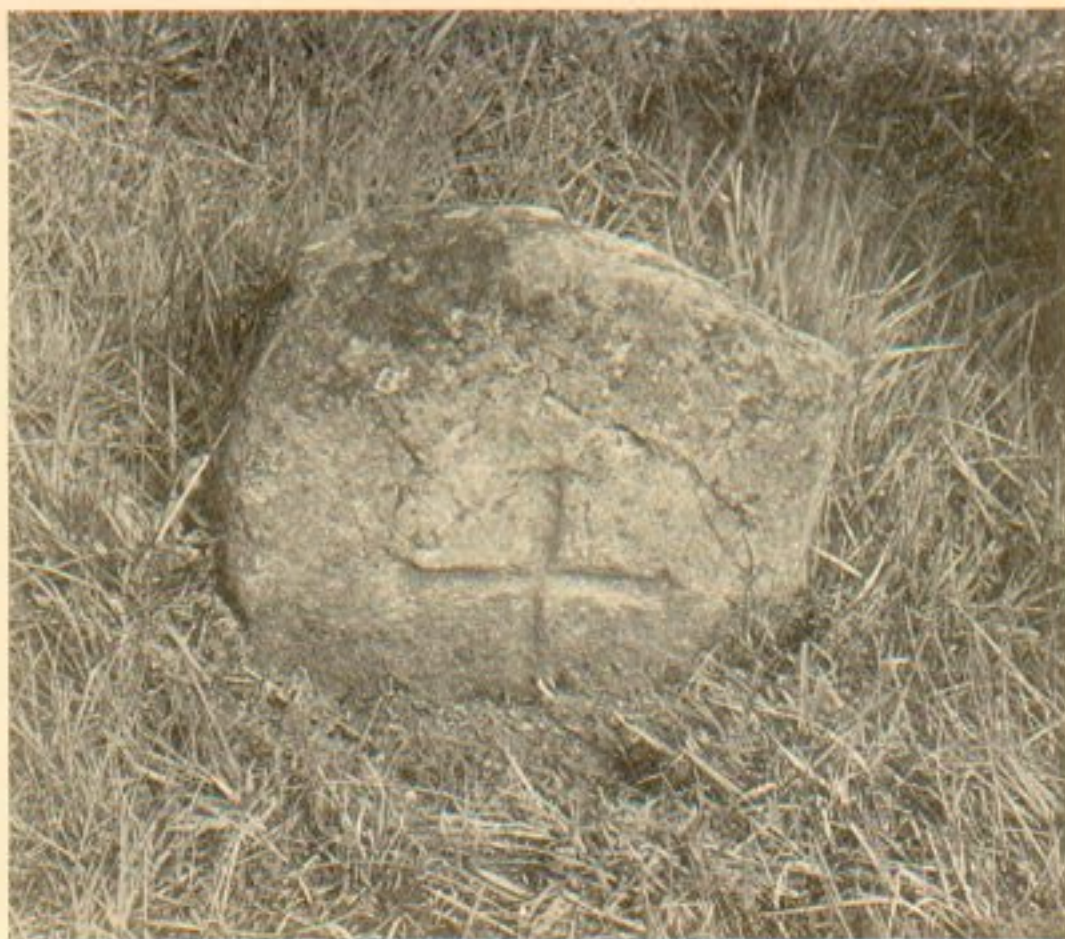


Fig. 9. Stone with incised Cross at Monymusk (No. 1).



Fig. 10. Stone with incised Cross at Monymusk (No. 2).

into the church, there is a small cross incised within a circle. The diameter of the circle is 9 inches, and the length of the arms corresponds therewith, since they terminate at the circumference of the circle. The cross corresponds in form with the upper portion of that carved upon the cup-marked stone at Tofthills, figured in last year's *Proceedings* (p. 212, fig. 4), but it has neither a shaft nor an outer circle. It is also like the figures on the flat stone in St Medan's churchyard (No. 3), but it lacks the cusps outside the circle.

It seems unlikely that this stone is in its original position. Probably some workman found it lying uncared for about the church or churchyard, and utilised it as a paving stone when the pavement was being laid down.

LOGIE COLDSTONE.

In the churchyard of Logie Coldstone there is a small early Celtic cross formed by sinking an oval background on a stone 1 foot 10 inches high, 11 inches wide, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. The cross is thus left in low relief (fig. 11).

An engraving of this last cross appears on p. 196 of *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*; and on the same page there is a drawing of the cross surrounded by circles which lies in the churchyard of Dyce (Dyce No. 2). With these exceptions the crosses and stones mentioned above are here described and figured for the first time.

NOTE ON A CROSS AT TULLICH.

Leaning against the outside of the north wall of the ruined pre-Reformation church of Tullich, near Ballater, which is said to have been founded by St Nathalan, is a well-known collection of sculptured stones. One of these is a symbol stone, bearing on its face the "Double Disc," the "Elephant," and the "Mirror" symbols; the others are stones having crosses of various sizes and shapes engraved upon them. It is to the central one of the group standing within the old doorway that I wish to draw attention (see fig. 12).

The cross upon it is not unlike the small one at Logie Coldstone, though it is much larger in size. But, so far as I am aware, attention has not been drawn to the peculiar form of its base. The cross



Fig. 11. Stone with Celtic Cross in relief within a sunk oval at Logie Coldstone.

appears to rise from a heart-shaped figure, a portion of one side of which, however, has been broken away, owing to part of the stone having been damaged. This heart-shaped base would seem not to be a mere accidental mark on the surface of the stone, for although

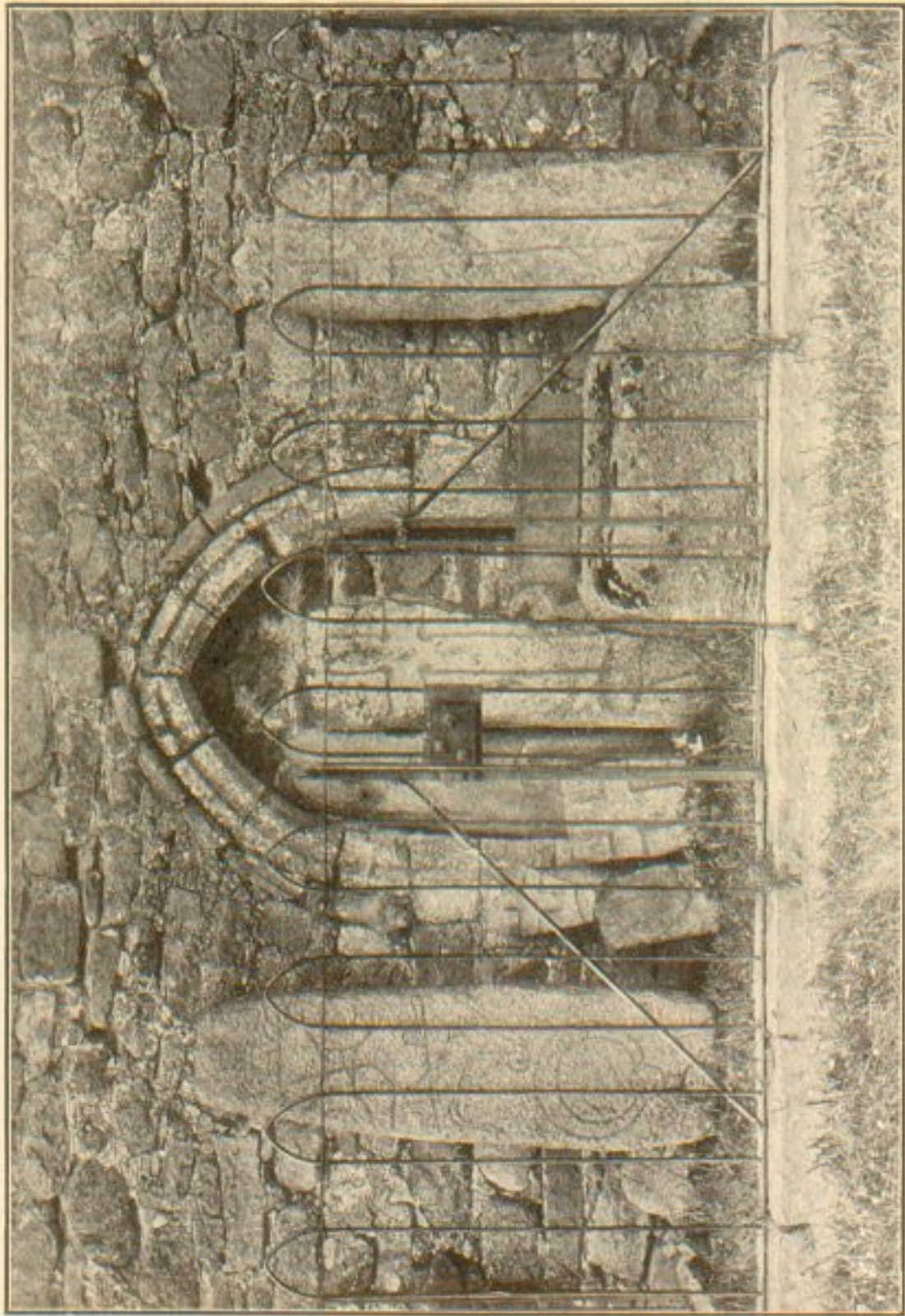


Fig. 12 Group of Sculptured Stones at the old Church of Tullich, near Ballater.

no known cross exists in Aberdeenshire with a similar base, yet such an one occurs in the churchyard of Kirkmadrine, in Wigtownshire, where a heart-shaped or leaf-shaped base is clearly part of the design (fig. 13). This stone is preserved at the right-hand side of the niche in which



Fig. 13. Cross with peculiar base at Kirkmadrine.

the famous Kirkmadrine sculptured stones are placed, in the outside of the gable of Kirkmadrine chapel, which was restored a few years ago by Sir Mark Stewart of Ardwell. This Kirkmadrine cross, like the one at Dyce, has four small circles opposite the intersection angles, though they are not connected by a larger circle surrounding the cross as at Dyce.

This cross has not been described or figured either in Dr Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* or in the more recently published *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, notwithstanding that another small cross of peculiar form, on the left side of the niche, has been figured in both of these works.