

## I.

## SHAFT OF A CELTIC CROSS FROM LONGCASTLE, WIGTOWNSHIRE.

BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR HERBERT E. MAXWELL, BART., D.C.L.,  
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The parish of Longcastle or Longcaster, a rectory in the Bishopric of Galloway, was annexed to the adjacent parish of Kirkinner about the middle of the seventeenth century. Andrew Symson, the industrious and intelligent Episcopalian minister of Kirkinner, who was appointed to that living about 1663, completed his *Large Description of Galloway* in 1684, revising and adding to it in 1692, when he handed over the manuscript to Sir Robert Sibbald, with the rest of whose papers it passed to the Advocates Library in Edinburgh. Here it rested till 1823, when it was printed and published by W. and C. Tait of Edinburgh, the editor, it is believed, being Thomas Maitland of Dundrennan. It was edited afresh from Macfarlane's transcript by Sir Arthur Mitchell for the Scottish History Society (vol. lii., 1907). Symson has the following brief reference to Longcastle:—"This parish of Kirkinner hath another little parish, called Long Castle, annex thereto, where was a little church for divine service . . . but now the said Kirk of Longcastle is ruinous."

It has now totally disappeared, the site thereof being occupied by a farm house and steading called Kirkland, forming part of my estate until the present year, when it was sold to the tenant. No doubt the old chapel would be made to serve as a quarry for material to be used in erecting these farm buildings, which appear to date from the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The old burial-ground has been obliterated; but inscribed headstones have been turned up from time to time, and sent to me for preservation. None of these appear to be of earlier than sixteenth-century work; but during the winter 1920-1921 the tenant, Mr Gordon, searching for a long stone to serve as lintel in a pigstye, unearthed the shaft of a large cross, sculptured on both sides (figs. 1 and 2). It had been made to serve as the cover of a built grave which, unfortunately, I had no opportunity of examining. No doubt it was several hundreds of years younger than the cross. To adapt the cross to this secondary purpose its head had been chopped off. This, it may be assumed, was almost certainly of the circular form whereof so many examples survive in the Machars or eastern division of Wigtownshire (crosses in the Rhinns or western division being of a different type). The circular head in the Machars type is divided by four bosses (more rarely perforations) into as many equal limbs of a cross *patée*, with a

central boss, making up the number of the five wounds of Christ.<sup>1</sup> The design for this type of cross with the head and the shaft sculptured on both sides with interlacing basket-work seems to have emanated from Whithorn, examples being confined within a radius of a few miles from that centre.

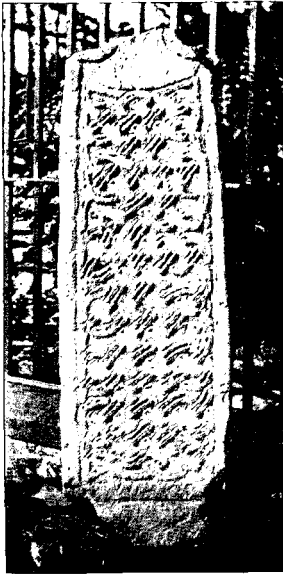


Fig. 1. Sculptured Cross-shaft from Kirkland of Longcastle, Wigtownshire.



Fig. 2. Sculptured Cross-shaft from Kirkland of Longcastle, Wigtownshire.

In the Longcastle example the material is the usual greywacke or Lower Silurian sandstone, far less easily worked than freestone, whereof there is none in Western Galloway, but much more durable. The shaft of the cross, wanting the head, measures 5 feet 1 inch in length and 1 foot 8 inches in width. It has been placed for safety in the burial-ground of Kirkmaiden-in-Fernis, which parish was incorporated with that of Glasserton after the Reformation.

<sup>1</sup> See Romilly Allen's *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part i. p. lxxvii; part ii. p. 55, fig. 108A; part iii. pp. 483-491.