

## PLATE XXVIII.

## BASE OF CROSS AT LLANGYVELACH (BETWEEN NEATH AND PONTARDULAIS).

I am indebted to Col. G. Grant Francis for a notice of this elegantly carved but hitherto unnoticed stone, and for the rubbings by which I have been able to complete the sketches made on the spot by J. D. Francis, Esq.

This stone is sculptured on all its four sides, partly with the interlaced ribbon pattern, and partly with the Chinese-like pattern not uncommon in Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the seventh to the tenth century, to which latter date, or possibly to the preceding century, I should be inclined to refer the execution of this sculpture.

It is cut out of a large block or mass of native sandstone, but owing to the water lodging in the oblong hole cut into its upper surface for the socket of the cross, and which is large enough to contain at least a couple of gallons of water, which in winter freezes, the stone has become cracked by the force of the ice, so that the whole is likely to be ruined by splitting into pieces. To prevent this, Col. G. G. Francis has suggested the boring of a hole to let the water through the bottom. Possibly a safer plan would be to fill the hole with strong cement, a plan which might also be adopted with good result in other stones with a socket-hole, as in the Penn-yr-Allt stone (Plate XXX).

There is a tradition on the spot that this cross was erected in the fifth century, whilst by others it is regarded as a font, because it has always water in it, not perceiving that that is just the reason why it is not a font.

In the MS. Life of St. David or Dewi (Brit. Mus., Bibl. Cott. Titus D. XXII. and in Bibl. Coll. Jesus, Oxford) a church is stated to have been built by the saint at Llangyvelach in Gower, and in the second Life of St. David (Bibl. Cott. Vesp. A. XIV. and Nero E. I.) a monastery is stated to have been founded at the same place, in which he afterwards placed the altar sent by Pepiau with which he had cured the blind king of Erging by restoring sight to his eyes. This consecrated altar in which the body of our Lord had lain, powerful in performing innumerable miracles, is stated in a later portion of the same Life to have been sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to St. David by the hands of an angel. Can the stone here represented have been transformed by the writers of these Lives of St. David into the consecrated altar sent from Jerusalem?

The stone is an oblong block 43 inches long by 26 inches wide, and 26 inches high. The socket-hole is 19 inches by 12½ inches, and 13 inches deep. The sculptures do not extend to the bottom of any of the sides (from which we may infer that it was intended to be sunk to a certain depth in the ground). My upper figure represents the ornamentation of the south side of the stone, the left-hand ornament of which has been ingeniously reduced in width in consequence of the sloping top of the stone at that end: the left-hand middle figure represents the west, and the right-hand one the east end, whilst the larger bottom figure represents the north side and top of the stone. It will be noticed that the interlaced ribbons are, contrary to the usual design, not continuous in several places.

Over the north door of the tower of the church of Llangyvelach is placed a slab (on which is carved a large plain Latin cross, 30 inches high, resting on a broad step or base) in lieu of an arch; the sculpture has however become so greatly defaced by the weather, even during the memory of Col. Francis (to whom I am indebted for a rubbing), that I have not thought it necessary to publish a figure of it. It appears to have had some kind of ornament between the arms of the cross.

PLATE XXIX. FIGS. 1-4.

STONES CARVED WITH CROSSES AT MERTHYR MAWR CHURCH.

During the rebuilding of the church at Merthyr Mawr various fragments of sculptured stones of an early period were found, together with numerous mediæval grave-stones, which have been carefully preserved, and at present (1877) lie in the churchyard adjoining to the east end of the church. As however some additional building is contemplated for a vestry, &c., it is to be hoped that an opportunity will be afforded for affixing them upright in the walls of the new building, so as to insure their more perfect preservation.

Amongst these stones is the inscribed one already published in this work, Plate II. fig. 5, page 8, and those represented in Plate XXIX. Of these, figure 3 represents the upper half of a wheel-cross, about 2 feet in diameter, with a small circular boss in the centre, and with eight spokes, the spaces between them being sunk and alternating in size, the narrower ones being rounded at the base, while the broader spaces have the bases truncated.

This cross is in fact very similar to the fragment of the wheel-cross represented in Plate X. fig. 1. The latter has however scroll-work round the margin, of which I perceived no trace on the fragment here figured.

Figures 1 and 4 represent two smaller stones, the former about 16 inches and the latter about 14 inches square. The ornamentation of these two stones is unusual, and their date consequently uncertain. Possibly, however, they may be assigned to the twelfth century.

Figure 2 represents a very plain wheel-cross sculptured at the top of an oblong block of stone about 5 feet high and 6 inches thick. The spaces between the four spokes, which represent a Maltese cross, are sunk, and the circle occupied by the cross has been surrounded by an incised circular line, nearly defaced, except on the under side of the cross. There are also two other incised, slightly curved lines dividing the base of the stone into two equal parts. The stone now stands against the eastern wall of the churchyard, near to its southern extremity, where it was pointed out to me recently by the Rev. Charles R. Knight.

PLATE XXIX. FIG. 5.

SMALL CROSS AT TYTHEGSTON.

I am further indebted to the Rev. Charles R. Knight for a notice and rubbing of a small crossed stone recently dug up in the neighbouring churchyard of Tythegston. It is only 30 inches high by 15 wide, the upper half ornamented with a cross of the Maltese form, with a small raised boss surrounded by a narrow raised circle in the centre, the spaces between