

SURVEY
OF
THE ANTIQUARIAN REMAINS
ON THE ISLAND OF
INISMURRAY
BEING
THE EXTRA VOLUME
OF THE
Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
FOR
1892





[Frontispiece.]



EXTERIOR OF WEST DOORWAY AND INTERIOR OF EAST WINDOW OF TEAMPULL MOLAISE,
INISMURRAY, CO. SLIGO.

From a Photograph taken by Mr. R. Welch, 1892.

A SURVEY
OF
THE ANTIQUARIAN REMAINS
ON THE ISLAND OF
INISMURRAY
(INIS muireadaiḡ)

BY
W. F. WAKEMAN
HON. FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF IRELAND
AUTHOR OF
A Handbook of Irish Antiquities, &c.

With a Preface by
JAMES MILLS, M.R.I.A.
Fellow and Member of Council of the Society



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P R E F A C E.

INISMURRAY lies four miles from the coast of the county Sligo, open on the west and north-west to the full force of the Atlantic waves. Like so many other islands round Ireland, it is the site of an early religious establishment. Saved by its ocean walls from ordinary marauders in former times, and from the wanton tourist of to-day; singularly free, as we may judge from the few notices in the annals, from the attacks of the Northmen; occupied by a small permanent population honouring the memories of its antiquities; Inismurray has retained a larger number of examples of primitive Irish Art than perhaps any other early Christian settlement in Ireland. Petrie placed this island first among the typical examples of our primitive Ecclesiastical remains. O'Donovan described its ruins as "perhaps the most perfect Cyclopean ruins in the world." And Lord Dunraven, after his exhaustive study of Early Irish buildings, says, that "the group of ruins here offers the most characteristic example now in existence of the earliest monastic establishments in Ireland."

GABRIEL BERANGER visited the island on the 24th June, 1779. His interesting account of his visit may be found in the Society's *Journal*, 1870, pp. 131-6. Beranger treats more of the people than of the antiquities. "There is an Abbey, as it is called," he says,

“very rude, a Church, and some other old buildings, said to have been erected by SS. Molash and Columbkil; the figure or statue in wood of the first they have there in a cell, and have daubed him all over with red paint to make him look handsome. Mr. Bigarry described his holiness upon the spot. They have many traditions, which were all gathered in Irish by our interpreter, and filled some pages of paper.”

Unhappily neither the drawing of the statue, nor the interpreter's notes of the traditions are forthcoming. Nor are Beranger's drawings of the Abbey and the Church, nor his plan, which he elsewhere tells us he made. There is, however, a sketch of a well-shaped four-handled mether, which was in use as a drinking cup.

Beranger's plan is no doubt that published by Vallancey, on Plate v., in his vindication of Irish History (“Collectanea,” vol. iv., Dublin, 1786). The Plate also contains a view of one of the altars surrounded by a low rectangular wall without opening; and with an irregularly conical stone rising from the altar. This represents one of the stations, probably the Great Station of the Trinity. This Plate is reproduced by Grose in his “Antiquities of Ireland,” vol. ii., Plates 121 and 122, facing page v.

VALLANCEY, who does not seem to have visited Inismurray himself, describes (“Collectanea,” as above, p. 212) the bee-hive cells as artificial caves for the worship of Muidhr, or the Sun, from which the island, he says, takes its name, Inis Muidhr, or Inis Murra. “Cloch Greine, Sun-stone, or Muidhr,” he adds, “is still remaining in its most perfect state, being a conical

pillar of stone, placed on a pedestal surrounded by a wall to preserve it from profanation. This is the *Mυδρος* of the Greeks, and the Mahody of the Gentoos."

In the description of the Plate given by Vallancey ("Collectanea," vol. iv., p. 220), which he calls "The Plan of the Temple of the Monument of Muidhr, in the Island of Innis Muidhr, now Innis Murra off Sligo"; the walls are said to be "built without mortar of large stones; the wall from five to ten feet thick, and ten feet high."

O'DONOVAN'S visit was made in July, 1836. He has recorded his experiences in a long letter preserved in the Ordnance Survey Collection, in the Royal Irish Academy. He wrote from Sligo, July 8th.—"Having often read about the famous wooden God, *Father Molash* of Inishmurry, I was driven by irresistible curiosity to make a pilgrimage to his shrine." He then, with much vigour, attacked certain religious writers who, he says, misrepresented the nature of the veneration offered by the islanders to this image. He was especially wrath at the notice which had appeared in a recent Magazine. He continues:—

"Having said so much upon this image, which is to me a mystery, I shall next proceed to describe my journey and the ruins on the island, which are the most perfect Cyclopean remains perhaps in the world. It is astonishing how preachers, and ignorant uneducated rascals of that description, have been able to say so much about the figure of Molash, and pass over the most curious remains of antiquity on this island, which will yet attract the notice of men of *real* learning and true piety, when hypocritical *cant* shall be condemned as a science having a worse tendency than phrenology, and Molaise's image preserved as a curious specimen of the art of Mo-Gop.¹

On Wednesday morning we got up at 4½ o'clock to secure a seat on the coach to Grange, a small village about eight miles from Sligo and one-and

¹ Written in another part of the letter, *mo gob*, the artizan.

a-half mile east of the nearest coast to Inish-Murray ; but being able to procure only one seat I was obliged to leave O'Connor in Sligo, and proceed alone to Grange, where I arrived at 7 o'clock. Here I met a labourer whom Lieutenant Chaytor had sent thither the evening before to guide me through the country. After some time we procured a boat and four very wild men to ferry us across. And indeed it was not without difficulty, for when they observed that I was determined upon going across, they were determined to take as much money out of me as they could, there being no other boat within three miles of the place. They ferried me across in one hour and twenty-five minutes, a distance they say of nine Irish miles ; but it is not so much."

He paid his first visit to the schoolmaster, a recent introduction, and the only person on the island who was a Protestant, or was not a native.

"The islanders, however, say and believe that they have not had a day's luck since he first came among them ; that the land has lost that fertility which distinguished it during the golden age, when they had no schoolmasters, and when a visit from the priest once in the three months was sufficient to teach them all the circle of their duty to God, to St. Molaise, and to one another ; that the *still* refuses to give the usual quantity ; that fishes have forsaken their shore ; in short, that the island and its 102 inhabitants have felt the withering influence of his presence. And it is not improbable that the effigy of St. Molaise made some signs of its prototype's displeasure on the landing of this strange character, who was to prevail upon them to send their children to learn how to read their prayers, and thus destroy their memories.

There are 102 inhabitants, reckoning men, women, and children, on this island. They are of indolent habits, and are supported by illicit distillation. The inhabitants of the neighbouring shores supply them with barley, potatoes, and other articles of food for the stomach and the *still*, for which the islanders give them in return a defined quantity of uisce beatha. There is but a small portion of the island cultivated, the people being so very indolent, and depending altogether for support upon the produce of the still and the success of a few fishermen. The revenue police, however, sometimes circumvent them, and reduce them to a woeful state by seizing upon large quantities of the mountain dew. Yet, notwithstanding the danger, they will continue to distil and invent new methods of evasion

There are five family names on this island, viz.—O'Heraghty (not Geraghty, as is generally said), O'Hart, O'Curret, Brady, and O'Boyle, to which add O'Brien, their teacher. It is said that fifty years ago they

were the most peaceable people in the world. At this time they had no stills, but lived by fishing and tilling the most fertile spots of the island; at which time no *mouse* was seen on the island. After the introduction of the civilised practice of distillation (that *irritamentum malorum*, the discovery of which is attributed by *Boerhaave* to Paracelsus) the islanders began to quarrel and to commit crimes displeasing to God and St. Molaise, and one of them went so far as to stab his neighbour's mare. This is about fifty years ago, and the natives of the island, and of the neighbouring shores, who frequently visit them, assert that the first *mouse* ever seen on the island was observed coming out of the carcase of this mare.

Now, I come to the heart's blood of my subject, viz. the ruins on Inishmurry.

1. It contains the ruins of a large Pagan CASHEL of wonderful dimensions, and enclosing several ancient houses, penitentiaries, and churches, which I conceive to be the work of later ages. The most curious feature in this cashel is a perfect cyclopean doorway, spared by the hand of envious time and protected by the superstitious veneration of the native, against the fury of the religious zealot and the savage utilitarian, to indulge the madness of the antiquarian! I viewed this door with great veneration, looking upon it as a work more than 2000 years old, and as existing long before the most enthusiastic patron of Ferns placed his ecclesiastical establishment inside it. It also brought so strongly to my recollection the less perfect ruins of Aileach, that I immediately set it down as probable that there may be yet discovered in Ireland a perfect specimen of a pagan Cashel. This door is about 6 feet 2 inches in height, in breadth 4 feet, and thickness of the wall 7 feet 6 inches. It is closed at the top on the outer front (papboopap) by a very beautiful flag-stone, measuring about 6 feet by 2 feet by 4 inches; on the inner front by a similar one, and in the middle by others of the same length, but of less regularity of shape. The Cashel itself is much more extensive than that of Aileach, and contains much more remarkable features, but as you can send a more expert draftsman to make a plan of it, I shall only give such directions as I conceive will send him on the right scent for inquiry.

[*Rough sketch of doorway.*]

No cement appears;
the work is tottering;
it bears all the marks
of most remote antiquity.

The greatest height of the wall, 15 feet. This will give us a tolerably correct idea of the original height of the Cashel of Aileach.

The stones were evidently those on the shores of the island, which can be easily quarried and separated into such blocks as compose the wall of the Cashel.

Within this Cashel are several small churches and houses.

[*Rough plan of buildings in Cashel, to which the reference letters in the following description refer.*]

a. [*Chamber marked on plan as Uamrac in wall near Toorybreynill.*].—A cavity in the wall, supposed by the natives to have been a place of punishment and confinement. I expected to find a gallery leading from this through the thickness of the wall, but there is none.

b. [Tuap uı ðpeunail—Toorybreynill.].—A small stone house, constructed exactly like a beehive, about 15 feet in height, and exactly like the stone houses of Aran described by Mr. Petrie. It is called by the natives, Tuap uı ðpeunail, *i.e.* O'Brenal's Tuar or Tower.

c. A small stone church, called Teampull-na-teimö, *i.e.* the Church of the Fire. There is a flag-stone in the floor of this little church, called leac na teimö, on which, it is said by some, fire was always kept lighted for the use of the islanders, but others say that whenever the fire went out on the island a sod of turf or a piece of wood was brought to this flag, to which, as soon as it was applied, it took fire! Not many years ago (if oral tradition can at all be depended upon), a Protestant had the profane assurance of defiling this flag . . . but lo! the pure Molaise implored his God to work a miracle to confound him and his companions, for a supernatural fire, issuing forth in swelling flames, caught his flesh and penetrated to his marrow, so that he was consumed, to the horror of his companions, who had accompanied him thither to insult and destroy the sacred ruins of the saint's churches and places of mortification!

d. [Seipel Molaise—the Teach Molaise of Mr. Wakeman].—A small stone church, which the natives use at present as their chapel. In this is treasured up with great veneration the famous wooden figure of the saint, which has been reported by canting hypocrites as worshipped with divine adoration. Of this see "Protestant Penny Journal." In this little chapel were several tombstones with inscriptions, but they have been all destroyed except one, which nobody succeeded in reading before me:—

Pray for Muredach
OĀ do Mupeöach
grandson of Comocan
hu Chomocáin
he sleeps here
hic ðopmıτ

Another small stone, beautifully ornamented with a cross, is inscribed:—

OĀ do p . . .

but the rest of it is seen in fragments scattered about the chapel.

It is probable that the above Muireadhach is the person from whom the island took its name of Inıp Muıpeaöacıġ, *insula Muredachi*, but this we shall be able to ascertain hereafter from various sources.

e. [Teampull na ðpeap].—Ruins of a stone chapel, built with

cement, and evidently the work of later times. It is called Teampull na b'peap, i. e. *the church of the men*, to contradistinguish it from another chapel of similar construction lying outside the Cashel to the east, and called Teampull na mban, or, *the church of the women*. In the former men only were interred, and in the latter, women only, and the islanders believe that if a man should be buried in Teampull na mban he would be supernaturally removed in the night to Teampull na b'peap, a thing which frequently took place in the recollection of tradition. The real name of T. na b'peap is Teampull Molaise, or Church of St. Molaise, and T. na mban, Teampull Muirpe, or the Church of the B. Virgin Mary.

f. A small stone house, constructed like a beehive, and called Tpačan a'copḡaoip, i. e. the Lent Trahan, or *place of prayers*, vide b. *supra*. The natives say that the word tpačan signifies a place where the monks sung their tpača, or vespers.

An b'peam do cleačtað abeič canað na b-tpača
An b'peam maol do ḡeil do'n čpačað.

I think, however, that it is a corruption of Tuppán, and means a *little tower*. The present pronunciation is T'pán. In this I am borne out by tuap ui b'peunail, where the word appears in its primitive form, tuap. The other is formed by adding the diminutive termination án. I also think that the stone houses of a beehive form are of pagan origin, but that they were afterwards used by the monks of St. Molaise for b'capčeach, or places of prayer and penance.

g. Another Tpačan or beehive-like stone house.

h. [*The water gate of plan.*] A perfect Cyclopean doorway, facing the east.

i. [*South doorway of Cashel.*] A doorway destroyed.

j. A very small house of beehive construction, lying outside the Cashel to the west, and called Teach an alap, i. e. the Sweat-house. Tradition says that people went into this for the purpose of undergoing a course of perspiration, the house having been previously heated; but whether for the purpose of atonement for sins, or of improving health, tradition does not now remember.

Under Tuar Ui Bhreunail is a grave called Tumba M'aoilin Ui Dalaiḡ, i. e. Moyleen O'Daly's tomb, over which is shown a flag with a round hole, which Moyleen made by forcing his head through the stone, when he was confined in this tomb for his sins!

A list of the names of Crosses, Stations, Carns, &c., to appear on the plan of Inishmurray :—

1. Olla muirpe.
2. Tpačan na Riḡ-ḡeap, Trahan of the Chiefs.
3. Leachta na Saḡapṣ, Monument of the Priests.

4. Cpoip mop, the large cross.
5. Tpatán Aoða, the Trahan of Hugh.
6. leachta pátaiḡ, Patrick's monument. The leachta is a square pile of stones, on the top of which an ornamental stone cross stands.
7. leachta Cholaim Cille, Columbkille's Monument.
8. Tpiónóid, the Trinity. There are three crosses here, a symbolical representation of the Tri-une Godhead.
9. A second leachta, named after Columbkille.
10. Roilic Oðrán, St. Odran's churchyard.
11. Caipéal móp is the name of the large Cyclopean wall surrounding the little churches and stone houses above described.
12. Cloca bpeaca, *i. e.* the speckled stones. They are round stones of various sizes, and arranged in such order as that they cannot be easily reckoned, and if you believe the natives they cannot be reckoned at all. These stones are turned, and, if I understand them rightly, their order changed by the inhabitants on certain occasions when they visit this shrine to *wish* good or evil to their neighbours.

The west end of the island is called Cean a Baile, head of the *Bally*; the east end is called Rú, *Anglice* Roo. A part of the north-east is called Típ na n-éun, *i. e.* the land of the Birds, because that part of the island is more frequented by birds than any other part. Towards the south of the island a rock runs into the sea, called Cpuacán, from its resemblance to a *stack*.

On the north-west is a cavern in a rock, into which the waves rush with great violence. It is called Poll na Seantúine, *i. e.* *the cavern of the old wave*. A similar name existed at Derry in the time of Manus O'Donnell (1520), but we have not been able to find it.¹

On the northern coast of this island is a well called Tobap na cobpach, *i. e.* *the well of aid or assistance*. When the islanders or the inhabitants of the opposite coasts are too long detained on the island by tempestuous weather they drain this well into the sea, and repeat certain prayers, by which the storm will immediately subside through the miracles of God and St. Molaise, who blessed this well to such a degree of sanctity that its waters might allay the anger of old ocean!

A similar name to this appears in the "Annals of the Four Masters." It was that of a well near Balleeghan, in the parish of Ryemoghy, in the county of Donegal. I searched for it there in vain, but think that it is the one now called Tobap Slan, *Fons Sanans*.

The safest landing-place on this island is called Claiḡ Móp.

I have now secured all the names on this island, and think myself fortunate in having got done there before the returning of the stormy

¹ There is one at Downpatrick Head, county Mayo. (*Note added by O' Donovan*).

season, for the natives say that the inhabitants of the opposite coasts are often detained on the island for weeks before the storm subsides, even though they have often drained the Well of Assistance (Cobap na Cobpac) to assuage the fury of the storms! But it appears that St. Molaise does not pray for them as fervently now as he was wont to do before the introduction of the unsaintly art of distillation.

They are governed with arbitrary and absolute sway by their king, Patrick O'Heraghty, a nobleman now in the 37th year of his age. He derives his power, not from primogeniture or seniority of family, but from his muscular strength, and possessions in cattle, tillage, and potteen, but particularly from being employed as sub-sub-agent by Mr. Wynne. He is tall and athletic, of a morose, implacable disposition, and can kill a sheep and dissect a goose with more than common skill. An idea can be formed of his absolute authority from one act, which Mr. Wynne should check: he has contracted a dislike to a few families on the island, and to prevent them from passing his door he has built a Cyclopean wall to stop up the pass against them, thus putting them to a round of a quarter of a mile in going to their houses. This is a most unjust and tyrannical act, as O'Heraghty has no right to the land on which he has built this barrier. I would think it the duty of any honest man to make this known to Mr. Wynne, but I fear that if O'Heraghty be prevented from indulging his tyrannical disposition in this comparatively harmless manner, he may give vent to it in a more violent channel. I can plainly see that the schoolmaster is afraid of him, and not without cause, as the king could prevent the children from attending his school, or report him to the priest as instilling poisonous doctrines into the minds of the growing generation. Howbeit, Mr. Wynne finds him so useful, that I guess he will not be willing to swallow any complaints made against him unless his conduct becomes reprehensible by law; and the islanders know so little of the liberties which the law of England allows them, that it is probable they will lie in passive obedience under his iron rod, as did his clan under O'Neill in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Let all the notices of this island of Inip Muirpeadairg be collected from the "Book of Lecan," "MacFirbis," and the "Annals of the Four Masters," as also those referring to Neipin . . . &c.

Your obedient humble Servant,

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

SLIGO, *July 8th*, 1836."

It may, perhaps, be observed that O'Donovan's letter, though official, was probably not intended for publication. His antiquarian experience too was still unripened. But his letter is of too much interest and

value not to be included in this record of the antiquities of Inismurray. The article which is more than once referred to in the letter, and which so much excited O'Donovan's wrath, appeared in a little-known periodical, "The Protestant Penny Magazine," of October 25th, 1834. It includes a sketch of the east end of Teach Molaise, with the wooden statue supposed to represent the saint; and a less accurate sketch of the exterior of the same building. (A copy may be seen in vol. 1649 of the "Haliday Collection of Pamphlets, R.I.A.")

LORD DUNRAVEN, in his "Notes on Irish Architecture," edited by Miss Stokes, published in 1875, gives five photographic illustrations of the principal buildings on Inismurray. These are most admirable pictures, and moreover possess an unique value from having been taken before the restoration work of the Board of Works. They will be found in volume i. of his great work, as follows:—

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|-------|----------|--|
| Plate | XXV.— | External View of Cashel (Double-page Plate). |
| „ | XXVI.— | Interior of Cashel. |
| „ | XXVII.— | Tempul Molaise. |
| „ | XXVIII.— | Oratory of S. Molaise (S.W. View). |
| „ | XXIX.— | „ „ (S.E. View). |

There is also on p. 52, an illustration of the "Cros-na-Trinoide," a drawing by Miss Stokes of the stone illustrated by Mr. Wakeman, at p. 142.

Miss Stokes, in her edition of Petrie's "Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language," published by this Society, devotes two Plates to the Inismurray stones. Of the five stones engraved on these two Plates, four are well illustrated in the present volume. The fifth, called by Miss Stokes the "Cross of the

Women," Mr. Wakeman does not notice. It is a stone with an inscribed double cross. The lines forming the head and the extremities of each pair of arms are separated into diverging spirals, after the manner of the simple cross on p. 77.

Lord Dunraven's descriptions of the Cashel and its buildings are not only, in many respects, the fullest we possess, but must ever retain exceptional importance from their having been written before any disturbance of the stones which may have been produced by the work of restoration.

"The walls are very much broken, particularly on the inside. The highest part remaining is on the N. and N.W. side, where at present, it is about 13 ft. high. Between thirty and forty years ago, when Dr. O'Donovan visited the place, the wall was 15 ft. in height. It is from 11 ft. to 13 ft. in thickness on the N. side, and on the S. it is from 7 ft. to 8 ft. thick. This cashel is built of blocks of sandstone, varying in size in different parts of the wall. On the N. side the stones are from 2 ft. to 4 ft. in length. These stones are well selected, and placed, not with their lengths running into the wall as in some of the Kerry or Galway forts, so that the ends appear on the face of the wall, but lie lengthwise, with their sides to the surface. The masonry may be said to be ruder than that of Staigue, and the interstices are not here filled in with spawls as they are in the Kerry fort. However, this latter fact may be owing to the different quality of the stone. On the east side the masonry is different, being composed of small thin flagstones."

His notice of the southern gateway of the cashel is important in view of the fact that it has since, as mentioned by Mr. Wakeman at p. 19, been entirely rebuilt:—

"The southern entrance is nearly destroyed, the western side having fallen to the height of 1 ft. That on the eastern side is perfect to the height of 4 ft. It is formed of small stones. The external wall at this point is formed of sandstone, and is also 4 ft. high. The masonry here is small. The entrance is 3 ft. wide, as well as I could make out, and the wall here 8 ft. thick."

"This cashel is covered with grey lichen, which, combined with the rude character of its masonry and the size of its stones, contributes to give it an even finer and more venerable character than that of the forts either in Kerry or in the Islands of Aran."

Teampul Molaise, he says, "is obviously the oldest of the three churches, but is unfortunately in a very dilapidated condition (*vide* Plate XXVII.).¹ The walls are built of rough sandstone, like the cashel; the stones are laid in the same manner, lengthwise. Very little cement was used; it was a sort of mixture of shell grouting and clay. I think it was merely grouted in the centre of the wall. Both gables are gone. There are pilaster buttresses at the east end, 2 ft. 4in. wide and 1 ft. deep. One of these is nearly destroyed, and the other is in a very tottering condition."

The Oratory of St. Molaise (Teach Molaise) "is built with shelly lime mortar. The ends of the north and south walls are not bonded into the adjoining parts of the gable, which has a peculiar effect. There is a very low-pitched stone roof, which seems to have been restored. It is a straight-sided arch; the stones externally appear to be placed length-wise on the slope. Inside, plaster and wattle-marks prevent the structure being seen."

Describing the largest of the clochauns, he mentions "a low flat projection—meant, I suppose, for a seat—on the right-hand side as you enter the cell; it is 10 ft. long and 2 ft. high. I have not observed this feature in the cells on the greater Skellig or elsewhere. There are no external off-sets to the wall or projecting stones from the roof, such as may be seen in the remains on the islands of the coasts of Kerry and Clare."

In 1880 came the most important event in the modern history of Inismurray. The Irish Church Temporalities Commissioners having transferred the ruins to the Board of Public Works, their Superintendent

¹ A reduced copy of this Plate appears, by permission of Miss Stokes, as Plate III. of the present volume, p. 48.

of Ancient Monuments visited the island, and made arrangements for such works as seemed necessary for the irpreservation. The Superintendent's report of his visit, printed in the Appendix to the 48th Report of the Commissioners of Public Works, Ireland (1879-80), pp. 74-5, is as follows :—

“ INNISHMURRAY.

Patron saint—Saint Molaise. Class of Monuments—oratories, cashel, well, cells, &c.

This island appears to have been almost wholly devoted to religious purposes. The principal ruins are situated within a cashel, or surrounding wall, inclosing a circular area of about 200 feet in diameter. There are two main entrances, one 6 ft. high and 4 ft. wide, the second of peculiar construction.

The cashel is of an average height of thirteen feet, and is eight feet wide at the top ; to the left of entrance is a most peculiar bee-hive cell, of two stories high, formed partly in the thickness of the wall, the entrance being but two feet square ; moving again to the left, there are indications of another cell which had its entrance from the interior of the enclosure, but the cell itself is outside ; leftways, again, is the curious entrance referred to above ; passing in the same direction, on the outside of cashel, is an indication of another entrance ; then comes an oblong cell, five feet by seven feet, with entrance two feet square, all within the thickness of the wall ; at either side of this cell, are steps which formed approaches to the top of the wall, as at Staigue Fort. This oblong cell appears to be connected with a number of others within the area ; in fact, the ground to the westward seems to have been burrowed in all directions, so as to form cells. Within the circuit of the cashel are three rectangular oratories :—

1. Tempul ara Tinnu.
2. Tempul Molaise,
3. Mainster.
- 1st. Church of the Sick.
- 2nd. That of St. Molaise.
- 3rd. The School.

Tempul Molaise is very perfect with a stone roof, and in it is the curious effigy of the saint, carved in wood. I consider this to be the lid of a timber coffin—the character of the carving will probably date to the fourteenth century. Close to the sea is another church, Tempul Muire or Mary's church, probably fourteenth century ; here the women are buried, and the men within the cashel. Round the island are seven

stations held in great reverence by the inhabitants, who, as penance, make circuits of the island, returning from each station to the cashel, where are a number of round stones; as each station is come to they return to these stones and turn one for every station. Sir S. Ferguson, in one of his poems, refers to these "cursing stones." There are many curious crosses and inscribed slabs. Outside the cashel is a domed well, with steps leading to it.

The oratories all require more or less care. Many parts of the walls will have to be repaired, especially Mainster, which, if not attended to, may fall at any time.

The works on this island will be commenced at once."

The Report is not accompanied by either drawings, plans, or measurements. But it holds out the promise of judicious work, to be done only where needed for preservation. It was natural to look forward to the final report on the treatment of remains of so great interest and value. It is, therefore, rather disappointing to find the Superintendent's next report consisting but of two sentences:—

"INNISHMURRAY ISLAND, CO. SLIGO.

A careful inspection, and report on the curious remains on this island appeared in last year's report. The works therein recommended have been undertaken and satisfactorily completed." (49th Rep. Public Works, Ireland (1880-1), Appendix p. 93).

The works carried out by the Board cost £230 14s. 6d.: £192 8s. in accounts for 1880-1; and £38 6s. 6d. in those for 1881-2.

This Society now recognized the need of a thorough examination and report on the antiquarian remains in the island. In 1884, Mr. Wakeman was commissioned by the Committee of the Society, then known as the Royal Historical and Archæological Association of Ireland, to undertake the work. His labour resulted in the production of the present monograph. It is but too evident from Mr. Wakeman's

report that some of the works carried out by the person left in charge at Inismurray were entirely different in character from what was contemplated by the Superintendent in his first report. The following cases especially may be pointed to: the erection of a west gable at Teach-na-Teinidh¹ (p. 54); the alleged destruction of the Leac-na-Teinidh (p. 54); the removal of sculptured stones to different positions (pp. 74 and 103). A comparison of Lord Dunraven's photographs with those of Mr. Welch show that the walls of Teampull-na-bfear have been raised to nearly double their height.² Much more serious are the liberties which Mr. Wakeman reports to have been taken with the cashel wall.—See pp. 19, 25, 28. In some cases Mr. Wakeman's informants were not perhaps reliable, but unhappily we have no official details of the works actually done to refute their statements.

These accounts, too, receive additional credibility from statements as to the work done on the Islands of Aran, and some other sites of early remains. Thus a writer in the *Athenæum* of 29th August, 1891, reports that at Skellig Michael:—

“On the occasion of the visit of the Welsh and Irish Archæologists, the Board of Works' restorations were found to be in ‘full blast.’ A common mason was seen pulling down and building up different parts of the dry-built walls at his own sweet will, without superintendence of any kind. It is almost inconceivable that such a thing should be allowed to go on.”

Dr. Anderson, in the *Archæological Review* of May, 1888, in the interests of scientific archæology, entered a strong protest against the treatment of the priceless

¹ As it now stands this is a gable of ordinary masonry, such as might be built for a workman's cottage. In the plan printed by Vallancey, and referred to at p. vi, there is an ope shown in the portion of the gable that was standing in 1786.

² See Plates III. and IV., at p. 48.

antiquities of Aran and Inismurray. *The Spectator*, and *Antiquary* too, have raised their voices in the same cause, and seem to reprove the apparent indifference of Irish Antiquaries in a matter of such importance to archæology.

The Board of Works have done much commendable work in their treatment of many of our old buildings, but it is obvious that much danger threatens primitive structures, such as those of Inismurray, which are not subject to ordinary architectural rules, when the zeal of a foreman of works is unchecked by archæological knowledge. In the words of Dr. Anderson (*Archæological Review*, May, 1888, p. 188), in reviewing the treatment of our Ancient Monuments, with special reference to Inismurray:—"Misapplied zeal in 'restoration' is fatal to the interest of such structures, either as national monuments or materials of science."

Mr. Wakeman was commissioned by the Committee in 1884, as has been stated, to write this monograph for publication in the Society's series of extra volumes. After the death of the Rev. James Graves, in March, 1886 (when the work was just ready for the printer), the issue of the Society's *Journal* fell much into arrear. In order to continue its publication, Mr. Wakeman's monograph was sent to press, and issued to the members early in 1887, in lieu of one of the quarterly parts of the *Journal* for the year 1886. This issue of the Paper having long since been exhausted, and copies being frequently sought for, the Council now consider that a reprint in the form of an extra volume, as originally intended, would be acceptable to the Fellows of the Society, and all interested in Irish Archæology.

The drawings were made by Mr. Wakeman during

two visits to the island. The first before its antiquities were taken in hand by the Board of Works. The second, a more prolonged one, in 1885, after the completion of their restoration operations.

Mr. Wakeman's practised eye and skilful pencil have here preserved every line of the stone gravings remaining on the island. The monograph supplies a model of what we would gladly see done for every island and every parish in Ireland. Beyond the value of preserving a record of the early remains which the exposure to weather and the vandalism of tourists are steadily reducing, Mr. Wakeman has pointed out another danger which threatens some of the most interesting of our early remains, and to which we have already adverted. The warning given in the case of Inismurray, makes it eminently desirable that all our primitive antiquities should be carefully studied and drawn by trained workers. Meanwhile Mr. Wakeman's monograph is offered as an earnest of such work, and a model and guide for those who would follow him.

The notes distinguished by the initials "W. M." were added to the original edition by Col. Wood-Martin, who was, at the time of its publication, Editor of the *Society's Journal*.

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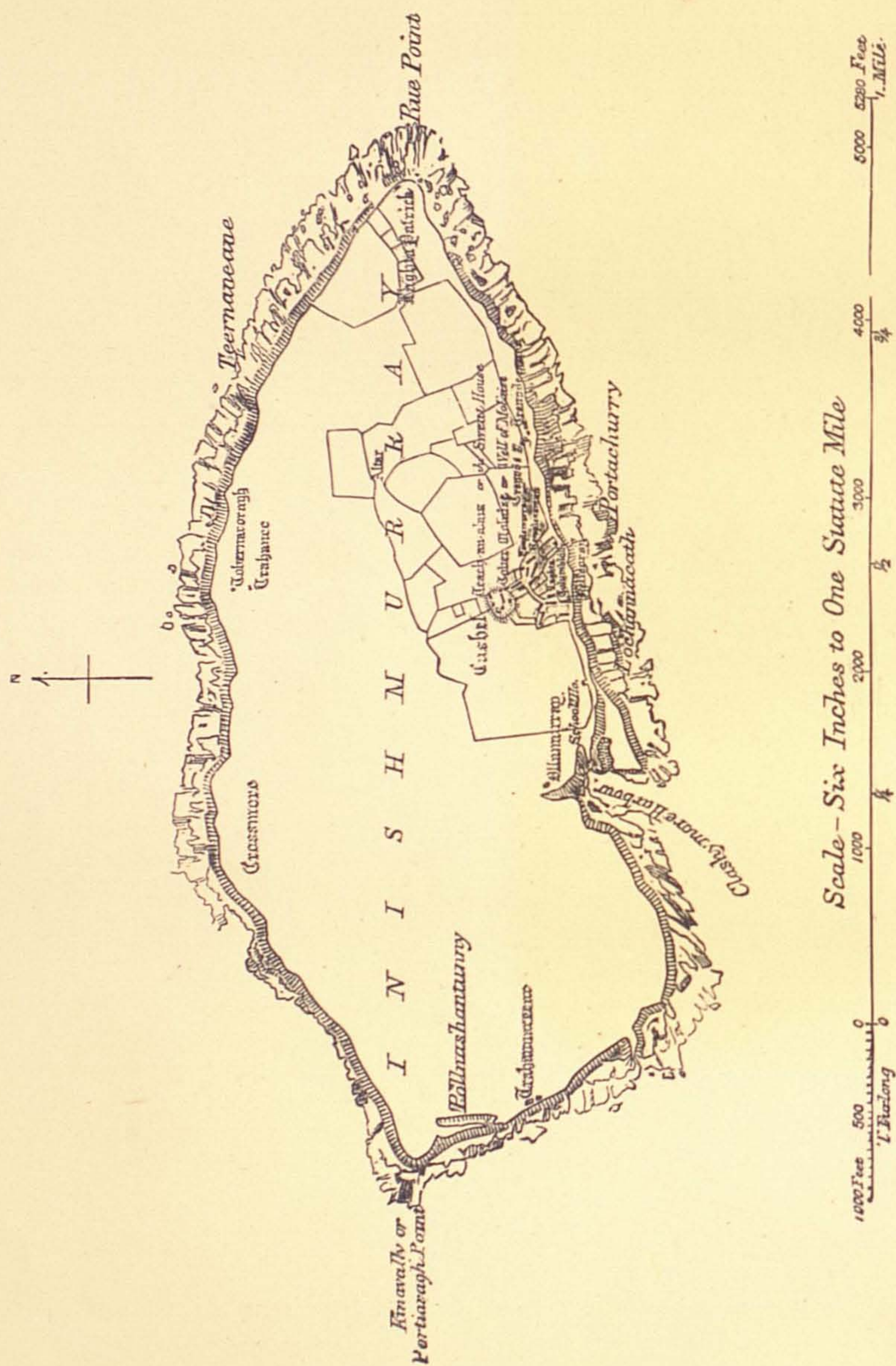
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THE ISLAND

OF

INIS MUIREDAICH, NOW INISMURRAY.

THERE is scarcely an island upon the coast of Ireland, or embraced by the waters of inland lake or river of that country, which in early days did not contain one or more churches, accompanied usually by a variety of minor ecclesiastical structures, *leachta*, crosses, &c. &c. These objects were commonly held very sacred; and indeed it may be said that the veneration which they attracted during the primitive ages of the Western Church has, as a rule, continued unabated even to our own days.

Amongst sites attractive to archæologists, who, in existing monuments would read, mark, and trace certain early, and occasionally obscure phases in Celtic art, military, ecclesiastical, and decorative, Inismurray is probably the richest in interest which can at the present time be pointed to.

This island lies in the Atlantic, at a distance of about four miles and a-half from the point of Streedagh, parish of Ahamlish, on the coast of Sligo. The nearest village to Streedagh is Grange, about one mile and a-half distant. With its long, low, level tableland, and dark, generally perpendicular sides, Inismurray, as seen from

a little distance, might, to an imaginative mind, present the idea of a Titanic ironclad, armed near its centre with a mighty turret—the Cashel.

The greatest length of the island is little over one mile; its extreme breadth slightly more than half that measurement; and its area may be computed as 200 acres, of which only some 130 can be utilized, affording grazing-sites for a few horses, asses, cows, sheep, and goats. There are some patches of grain (oats) and potato-ground, and a few spots where turf of somewhat inferior description may be dug. The rest is rock—calp sandstone—barren of interest to all but landscape painters of a cultivated order, geologists, and I may even say botanists, for the hollows, and the very crevices of the more sheltered slopes amongst the wild northern and western cliffs—especially those which border the awful chasm of *Pollnashantunny* (“the hole or pool of the old wave”)—are rich in a variety of flora.

Strange to say, birds are comparatively few at any period of the year. The probability is that the island is not sufficiently remote from the mainland, and that its cliffs are therefore less attractive for breeding instincts than are those of the noble headlands of Teeling and Slieve League, which loom at no great distance to the north-east, or the precipices of the Benbulbin range, stretching along the neighbouring coast of Sligo.

The natives assert that rats could not live upon the island: there are certainly none there. Some seven hundred years ago a similar statement in connexion with St. Ibar’s establishment on Beg Erin, off the Wexford coast, was made by Giraldus Cambrensis; and we read in Hollinshed that Armagh city “is said to be enemie to rats, and if anie be brought hither, presently it dieth, which the inhabitants impute to the praiera of St. Patrick.” Mice, however, are known to make raids upon the too frequently scanty store of grain possessed by the islanders. Their first advent would, by general report, appear to be of comparatively recent date—“and thereby hangs a tale.” The legend is that some seventy or eighty years ago one of the natives, with malice prepense, and envy and hatred in his

heart, stole out one night, and feloniously slew, by stabbing, the cow which was the chief support of a neighbouring family. The blood of the milk-giver, thus cruelly, in a double sense, slaughtered, flowed, it is said, in more than one direction, but everywhere, upon congealing, instantly quickened, and became transformed into mice. These animals ultimately proved a nuisance on the island; but for many years past the annoyance which they have occasioned in the destruction of stores has been scarcely appreciable.

The Census return of 1881 showed that there were then 101 persons—men, women, and children—living upon Inismurray. In 1836, according to O'Donovan, the population numbered 102. The family names were then — O'Curret, Brady, O'Heraghty, O'Hart, and O'Boyle. Since that time new blood would appear to have been introduced, the names now being—Brady, Heraghty, Boyle, Waters, Mannion, M'Gowan, Dunleavy, and Hoey. The O'Currets have disappeared. It will be remarked that in the interval several of the families appear to have dropped the prefix O to their names. Could O'Donovan have given them the O because he believed that to be the right form?

Only three or four persons living on the island can be considered strangers: I refer to a detachment of the Royal Irish Constabulary quartered there on revenue duty; for, be it sadly spoken, until a few years ago, the domain of St. Molaise was a centre from which *poteen*, i. e. illicit whiskey, flowed extensively over the whole seaboard from Sligo to Bundoran, and even to a considerable distance inland. That source of income has ceased, and yet the natives seem to live as well as ever.

They are all Roman Catholics, and, with a single exception, speakers of two languages, viz. Gaelic and English. The exception is an extremely ancient woman, who could never be prevailed upon to learn the Sassanach tongue. It is interesting and amusing to hear little children chattering to each other in Celtic—address them, and you will be replied to in English, the pronunciation of which may probably savour somewhat of the Elizabethan era, but which, in correctness of style,

is usually greatly superior to the average utterance of Cockneydom. With the rising generation the prevailing use of the Irish tongue will, in all probability, expire. It is not, even now, the usual medium of communication between the islanders and people of the neighbouring coast. With Sligo, for many years past, as a rule, trading operations, large or petty, have been negotiated in English, a few of the elders only transacting affairs in the language of the Gael. All this, from an æsthetic point of view, is no doubt greatly to be regretted, but there is no use in repining; inexorable utilitarianism seems certain to triumph.

In general the people are of a fair-haired, comely, well-built race, probably Tuatha de Danaan; they are expert, courageous boatmen, and from time to time have furnished excellent seamen not only to the mercantile service, but also to the Royal Navy. True it is that the islanders are occasionally a little antagonistic to certain legal claims, and will resist payment of county cess, or tax for roads and institutions, in which they not unwarrantably consider they have no concern. Yet they belong to the county of Sligo, and are expected to contribute more or less. They say, "We have no roads, nor do we require them, and if we did they would not be made for us; we want a harbour, or at least a boat-quay—that we cannot get, else we might gain plenty of money by our fishing; and why should the authorities oblige us to pay them taxes from which no man, woman, or child on the island could expect to obtain the least benefit?" Let us trust that a time may soon arrive when Inismurray shall have its harbour of refuge for vessels even of goodly size, and that the teeming treasures of the ocean, by which it is surrounded, may at length be utilized not only for the benefit of the islanders, but, in these days of railway communication, for that of the country at large.

The boats belonging to Inismurray are unhappily very few, the number being, it may be said, totally inadequate for the requirements of fishermen who, in many instances, in order to cast a line, are obliged to use a favourably situated rock or shelf of cliff as a plat-

form from which to ply their wretched "engines," consisting generally of a rough pole, a cast of frayed twine, a sinker of stone, and hooks attached to a foot or two of semi-decayed whip-cord. Their little crafts, however, generally staunch and well-built, are admirably suited for near-shore purposes and trips to the mainland; they have here entirely superseded the *curach*, composed of wattle-work, covered by horse or cow skins, which, in the memory of many still hale and fresh, was the prevailing kind of small boat used by the people of our southern and western coasts.

It is, indeed, somewhat strange to find, within less than twelve hours' travel from the metropolis of Ireland, an insular community, numbering more than a hundred, yet unpossessed of a road, harbour, or even of a boat-pier. In other respects, Inismurray would seem to be equally remarkable. For many a long day there has not been *resident* upon the island a clergyman of any denomination, and yet the inhabitants are orderly and religious, assembling for prayers in the venerable temple (*Teach Molaise*) on every Sunday and Church holiday. They have neither magistrate, doctor, surgeon, nor apothecary amongst them; the absence of medical gentlemen is not much regretted, the people generally preferring to die of extreme old age! There exists not a single shop, ever so small, from Rue Point to Kinavally, or from *Reilicodrain* to Teernaneane—and this means within the length and breadth of the Isle of Muiredaich!

Until very recently the government of the island might have been described as monarchical in character, one of the O'Heraghtys usually occupying the position of *Righ*. Upon the demise of the last chief of that dynasty his widow succeeded. This lady re-married, and dying, left two sons, one being an O'Heraghty, and the other (by the second husband) a Waters. Between these two worthy individuals remains a rivalry still unsettled, so that it might be said a kind of interregnum at present exists.

Formerly persons who had compromised themselves by quarrelling unnecessarily with their neighbours, or by the commission of any act contrary to the unwritten

law of the community, were, by command of the *Righ*, banished to Ireland for a period lengthy in proportion to the character of the charge made and proved against them. Such sentences, however, were very rare. In the present order of affairs the detachment of the Royal Irish Constabulary have little indeed to do but, as in duty bound, to make a patrol of the cliffs once in twenty-four hours.

The National School, admirably conducted by Mrs. Waters, may be regarded as the only public institution which the island presents.

I am kindly permitted by Richard Jones, Esq., of Streedagh House, Grange, to state for the information of intending pilgrims to Inismurray, that upon receiving some days' notice of their desire to visit the place, he could arrange with certain fishermen to have a proper craft in waiting at Streedagh Point. The cost of the trip to and fro would be from one pound to thirty shillings, according to the number to be conveyed, or the state of the weather,¹ but there is not accommodation upon the island for anything like a party. In the event of contrary winds causing prolonged stay, it would be desirable for visitors to bring with them creature comforts, such as tea, coffee, bread, &c., and perhaps some tinned meats—fish they can generally be supplied with on the spot. It is not amiss to have a few ounces of common twist tobacco for distribution amongst the islanders, whose services in small matters will at times be required. They are often very proud, and will at times refuse *money*, which they think has not been earned—but *tobacco*, never! for that is a gift which, as a native once said to me, “one gentleman may receive from another.”

Except during extremely calm, settled weather, ladies should not attempt a trip to the island, its people possessing no means of accommodating strangers of the gentler sex who would pay more than a flying visit.

¹ Tourists can be conveyed in a good five-ton boat, from Rosses Point, near Sligo, for thirty shillings; and if the wind

be favourable, this is the pleasanter as well as the shorter route.—W. M.

NOTICES OF THE HISTORY OF INIS MUIREDAICH.

Inis Muiredaich, in English "the Island of Murray," has from a very early period been known by the name which, in the spoken language of its natives, it still bears. Strangely enough, as pointed out by Lieut.-Col. Wood-Martin, in his valuable *History of Sligo*, recently published, it appears upon a map, made in 1609, of the Sligo and Donegal coasts, as "ENISHE HUMRIE, or MURRIE."

Who this individual was, or how it came to pass that the place is called after him, has not yet been ascertained. The name was a common one among the ancient people of Erin. We read that in the time of St. Patrick there was at Killala a Bishop Muiredach.

It is not improbable that from him the place, now so completely associated with the memory of St. Molaise, derives its appellation; there is a tradition still extant amongst the islanders that its monastery at one time contained a full library of books. According to the same tradition a number of the volumes are supposed to have been immured, for the sake of concealment, within the mass of a certain tomb-like projection, which occurs on the interior of the south side-wall of *Teach Molaise*, perhaps the oldest of the remaining churches. Whether there be any truth in the story of a receptacle here occurring I cannot tell; but the legend is curious, especially when considered in connexion with a secret cavity which I was fortunate enough to discover within the body of the altar immediately adjoining, and of which very curious "find" a full description shall be given further on. This supposed book depository is also called the "bed" of the saint, and over it has been placed his celebrated oaken effigy. It is now needless to speculate on the probable fate of the manuscripts which, no doubt, at one time were written or preserved in this chief establishment of St. Molaise. Not a few must have been destroyed during the ravages of the Scandinavian pirates; others, it may be presumed, were

allowed to be scattered and lost; while not a few, in all likelihood, were in the course of ages, and the decadence of learning, consigned to dust, ruin, and oblivion.

It is surprising and saddening to find that of Inismurray—so rich, as will be seen, in precious ecclesiastical and other remains—in addition to the following scanty notices, no early records appear as yet to have been discovered. The *Felire of Oengus*, at August the 12th, contains the subjoined passage:—

“The calling of Laisrén of the Island of Muiredaich, great, magnified.”

The *Martyrology of Donegal* presents the following notice:—

“August 12. Molaisse, *i. e.* Laisrén, son of Deglan of Inis Muiredaich in the north (*i. e.* the north of Connaught); he it was who, at the cross of Ath-Imlaisi, pronounced sentence of banishment on St. Columba.” (See Adamnan’s *Life of St. Columba*, ed. Reeves, p. 286; and *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*, edited by Miss Stokes.) Dean Reeves has taken care to point out that this St. Molaise, or Laisrén, is not to be confounded with St. Molaisi, of Diamhinsi, or Devenish (an island in Lough Erne), son of Nadfraoich, whose day is September the 12th.

It would appear from statements made by O’Donovan in a letter preserved amongst the Sligo Ordnance documents in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, that the Molaise of Inismurray, and the Patron of Devenish, similarly named, were by him considered one and the same individual. In the work on Irish Inscriptions just referred to, Miss Stokes writes: “It appears in the passage in the *Life of Columba*, regarding this saint, that he was already a man in authority when Columba was still young, and thus we may believe him to have been some years his senior, and conclude that the foundation of his monastery was in all probability prior to that of Iona, and took place at some time early in the sixth century, about 520 or 540.”

The *Annals of the Four Masters* furnish the following references to Inismurray:—

“A.D. 747. Dicolla, son of Meinide, abbot of Inis-Muiredaich, died.”

“A.D. 798. Mac Laisre, the Learned, of Inis-Muiredaich, died.”

“A.D. 802.—Inis-Muiredaich was burned by the foreigners, and they attacked Ros Commain.”

There can be no doubt that these “foreigners” were Scandinavian rovers from Norway, or possibly from the country now called Denmark. Some of the older natives would seem to retain a faint traditional recollection of this, or probably some succeeding outrage committed by the Northmen. A long flat stretch of rock occurs upon the southern coast of the island, and at certain states of the tide, and in settled weather, presents a favourable and easy place for landing or embarking. At low tide the surface is quite dry, except in one spot near its centre, where a shallow pool of salt water is retained. This is called by the people *Lochan-na-Cath*, or the “Little Lake of the Battle.” I was told on the spot that in ages long past a great fight had here occurred between an invading force and the natives; and one of my informants even went so far as to say that the intruders were “the Danes.” It is much to be regretted that O'Donovan missed this interesting name, as forty years ago tradition on the island was much more vivid than it is at present, and some curious tale in connexion with the spot might at that time have been rescued from oblivion.

From the beginning of the ninth century to A.D. 1612 history would appear to be silent regarding Inismurray. At the latter date we read in the *Annals* that *Maeleoin O'Dalaigh* (Moylan O'Daly) died on All Souls Day, and was interred in Inis Muiredaich, “after bearing triumph from the world and the devil.” O'Daly's tomb still remains, but in a very shattered condition, as it has on more than one occasion been broken open and violated by revenue authorities in search of illicit spirits. Indeed, not very distant recollections seem to show that, as has been said of the proverbial sapper, “nothing was sacred” to the hunters after poteen.

THE ANTIQUITIES OF INIS MUIREDAICH.

In this section I propose to describe the antiquities remaining upon the island. The buildings and other monuments shall be mentioned in the order which their several peculiarities would seem to suggest. Of course it will be necessary to group together a number of the smaller objects, such as sepulchral *leacs*, altar-stones, &c., under a general heading; but I trust it will be found that not a single structure, or even one stone of interest, shall have failed to receive in proper place a special notice. The following is a list of the subjects referred to:—

1. The *Caiseal*, or Stone Fort, with its *cellæ*.
2. *Teach Molaise*, the Oratory or Dwelling of St. Molaise.
3. *Teampull-na-Bfear*, the “Church of the Men.” This, no doubt, was the *Teampull Mór*, or great church of the establishment. It is sometimes styled the “Monastery”; and is also known as *Teampull Molaise*.
4. *Teampull-na-Teinidh*, or the “Church of the Fire.” This structure is evidently less ancient than the other ecclesiastical buildings remaining upon the island.
5. *Teampull-na-mban*, or the “Church of the Women.”
6. A number of Altars, within or without the cashel, most of them bearing very ancient and curiously-carved crosses of stone, swearing-stones, &c. &c.
7. Two monuments of the class usually styled “Hole-stones,” which are held in high veneration on account of certain supernatural powers which they are supposed to possess.
8. Eight memorial *Leacs*, bearing inscriptions in Irish or Latin. Of these records four are here for the first time noticed.
9. Monumental stones, uninscribed.
10. Several *bullàns*, or rude font-like objects of stone, the precise use of which has not as yet been ascertained.
11. The Sacred Wells, with their coverings of stone.
12. The *Leachta*, or Stations, with their monuments.
13. Concluding remarks.

The above catalogue comprises every class of remains to be found on this singularly interesting island, which may in a manner be described as a museum of antiquities relating chiefly to the earlier period of the ancient Irish Church. Of course all cannot be supposed to belong to the days of SS. Molaise and Columba.

The cashel was, as I shall endeavour to show, at one time occupied by tenants differing widely indeed in thought and habits of life from the community of children of the Faith, who reared the temples which it now contains, and carved the memorial stones which still speak so eloquently of the past. The additions and alterations of mediæval date, exhibited by some of the sacred edifices, are interesting as indicating the continued occupation of the island by an ecclesiastical colony from the days when, as Spenser wrote—

“ Ireland flourishèd in fame,
And wealth, and goodness, far above the rest
Of all that bear the British Islands name ”—

down almost to our own time.

THE “ CAISEAL,” OR CASHEL.

Irishmen of cultivated mind in general, and our native antiquaries in particular, have for more than one generation rejoiced in the idea that in her ecclesiastical round towers, stone-roofed churches, bee-hive cellæ, sculptured crosses, and ogam inscriptions, Erin possesses antiquarian treasures which are peculiarly “ racy of her soil,” and stand unrivalled in point of interest by any monuments of antiquity of the same, or nearly the same, class and age to be found in Western Europe.

Within the memory of archæologists, many of whom are still in the vigour of life, a third class of monument, equally with the towers, &c. &c., characteristic of the genius of our ancient people, has, for the first time, formed a subject of study. I allude to the great stone fortifications usually styled *dun*, *caher*, *lis*, or *cashel*, which are chiefly, but not exclusively, found in the western and southern districts of Ireland, and of which only

a few of the larger examples have as yet been described and illustrated.

There can be no question that the date of the great majority of these often-stupendous works remains to be ascertained. In not a few instances, however, they belong to a period of authentic history, and are known to have been erected several centuries before the introduction of Christianity into this kingdom. We also learn, on trustworthy authority, that in the fifth century of our era several regal or princely magnates, upon their conversion to Christianity by St. Patrick, resigned their immemorial places of strength to the saint, to be used by him for purposes of his mission. Thus we find that Donoughpatrick, county Meath, has its name from *Domnach Padraig*, the "Church of Patrick," which stood on this site.

It is related in the life of our national saint—attributed to St. Evin, and published by Colgan in his *Trias Thaumaturga*—that Conall, the brother of King *Loeghaire*, who resided here, not only gladly accepted Christianity, and was baptized, but also showed great kindness to St. Patrick, and gave him his house or rath on which to erect a church, and the "outline" (writes Wilde) "of this very cashel can still be discerned in the present graveyard." In like manner was St. Patrick presented by Daire, the chieftain of the district in which the city of Armagh stands, with his dwelling-place—Rath Daire. The site is now occupied by the cathedral: it is scarcely necessary to state all trace of the rath has been obliterated. At Trim the saint was in possession of a similar presentation. Within the bounds of a grand prehistoric dun or cashel (in all probability a Firbolgian work), situated at *Muirbheach Mil*, on Aran Mór, are the remains of St. Macduagh's monastery, a foundation of the sixth century. When Petrie saw this fort, in 1821, its wall in one place was twenty feet in height, and thirteen in thickness at its summit.

It may fairly be asked why I have referred at some length to the occupation by early Christians of forts or dwellings, the work of pagan times, and which had obviously never been intended by their builders for

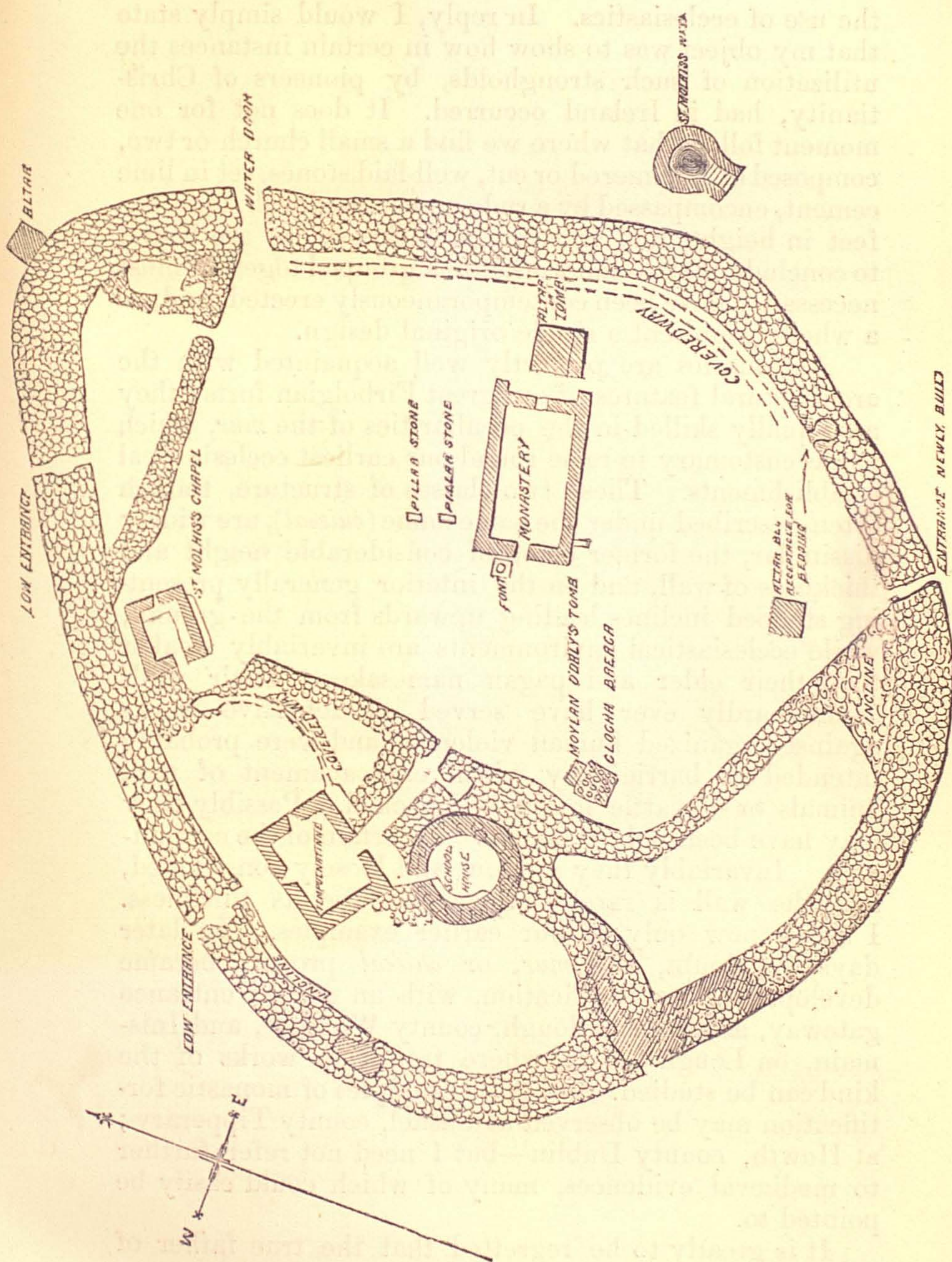


Fig. 1.—Inismurray Cashel.

the use of ecclesiastics. In reply, I would simply state that my object was to show how in certain instances the utilization of such strongholds, by pioneers of Christianity, had in Ireland occurred. It does not for one moment follow that where we find a small church or two, composed of hammered or cut, well-laid stones, set in lime cement, encompassed by a rude unmortared wall, eighteen feet in height, and thirteen in thickness, we are bound to conclude that all the works thus grouped together must necessarily have been contemporaneously erected, and, as a whole, represent a single original design.

Antiquaries are perfectly well acquainted with the architectural features of our great Firbolgian forts; they are equally skilled in the peculiarities of the *mur*, which it was customary to raise round our earliest ecclesiastical establishments. These two classes of structure, though often described under the same name (*caiseal*), are widely dissimilar, the former being of considerable height and thickness of wall, and on the interior generally presenting stepped inclines leading upwards from the ground, while ecclesiastical environments are invariably weaker than their elder and pagan namesakes. Their walls could hardly ever have served as defensive works against organized human violence, and were probably intended as barriers by which encroachment of wild animals or of cattle might be checked. Possibly they may have been only "bounds" to certain of the community. Invariably they are low, and loosely constructed, and the wall is rarely remarkable for its thickness. I speak now only of our earlier examples. In later days, no doubt, the *mur*, or *caiseal* proper, became developed into a fortification, with an arched entrance gateway, as at Glendalough, county Wicklow, and Inismain, on Lough Corrib, where transition works of the kind can be studied. Still later examples of monastic fortification may be observed at Cashel, county Tipperary; at Howth, county Dublin—but I need not refer further to mediæval evidences, many of which could easily be pointed to.

It is greatly to be regretted that the true father of Irish Archæology, Dr. Petrie, does not appear ever to



Fig. 2.— External View of Inismurray Cashel, as it appeared before the Alterations recently made by the Board of Public Works.

have visited Inismurray. He seems to have formed his opinion of Molaise's establishment from report only; and his remarks have been adopted by more recent writers, who have evidently been led by statements which Petrie himself, had his life been prolonged, would, in all certainty, have changed, or modified. His idea was that the cashel and its enclosures represented the wall, temples, and *cellæ* of an ecclesiastical town, "like those of the early Christians in the East, which were named Laura (λαύρα), a Greek word expressing the cloister, or enclosure of a monastery."

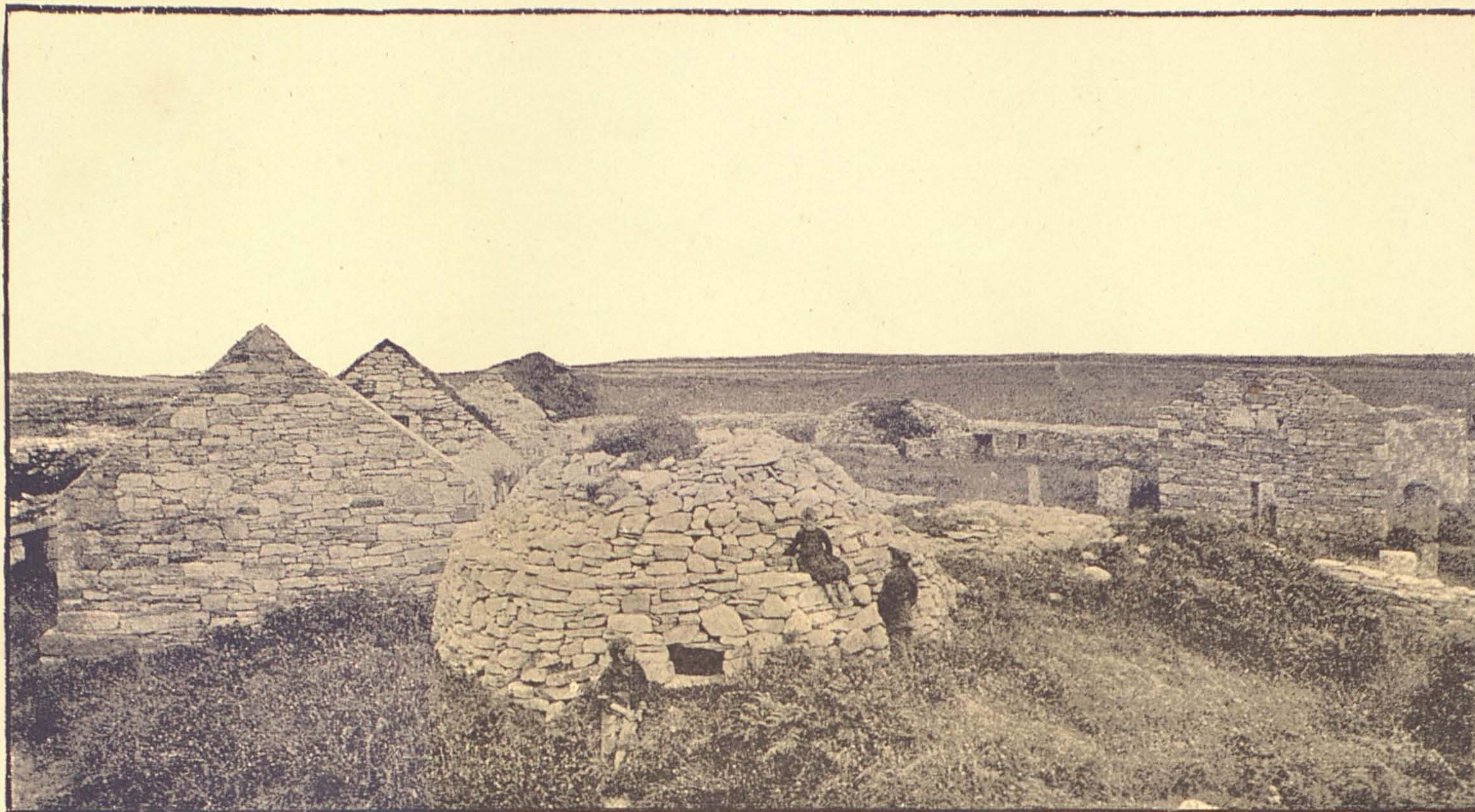
After a long and patient examination of the features and peculiarities of this great *caiseal*, or, as the word is now written, cashel, I can arrive at but one conclusion, viz. that the work throughout is at least as ancient as a number of military duns, or forts, remaining upon the Arran Islands, several of which there is strong reason to believe date from a period several centuries older than the dawn of Christianity in Ireland.¹

The structure consists of a wall (of uncemented and undressed stones), varying from seven to fifteen feet in thickness at its base, and in plan presenting the figure of a somewhat rude triangle, with corners rounded off. Its length from north-east to south-west is 175, and its breadth in the opposite direction 135 feet. These are internal measurements. The present height of the wall, in several of its portions, is as follows:—South side, seven feet six inches, as well as can be ascertained, the line of base being rather rough and irregular; east, eight feet nine inches; north, nine feet six inches; north-north-west, thirteen feet; west, nine feet nine inches.

There are four entrances, and possibly a fifth, which latter was situated to the south-west face, if we may judge from existing indications. The largest and most important entrance occupies a position in the north-eastern side of the wall—it is called the "Water-gate," probably from an adjoining well, dedicated to St. Molaise. Through it all bodies of drowned male

¹ Where the scale is not given with the Plate, measurements will be found noted in the descriptive letterpress.





TEAMPULL-NA-TEINIDH.

TOORYBRENNELL.

TEAMPULL MOLAISE.

View of Interior of Cashel, from a Photograph by Mr. R. Welch, 1892.

The gable of Teampull-na-Teinidh, and the upper part of the side-wall and gable-top of Teampull Molaise, shown here, were re-built by the workmen employed by the Board of Works.

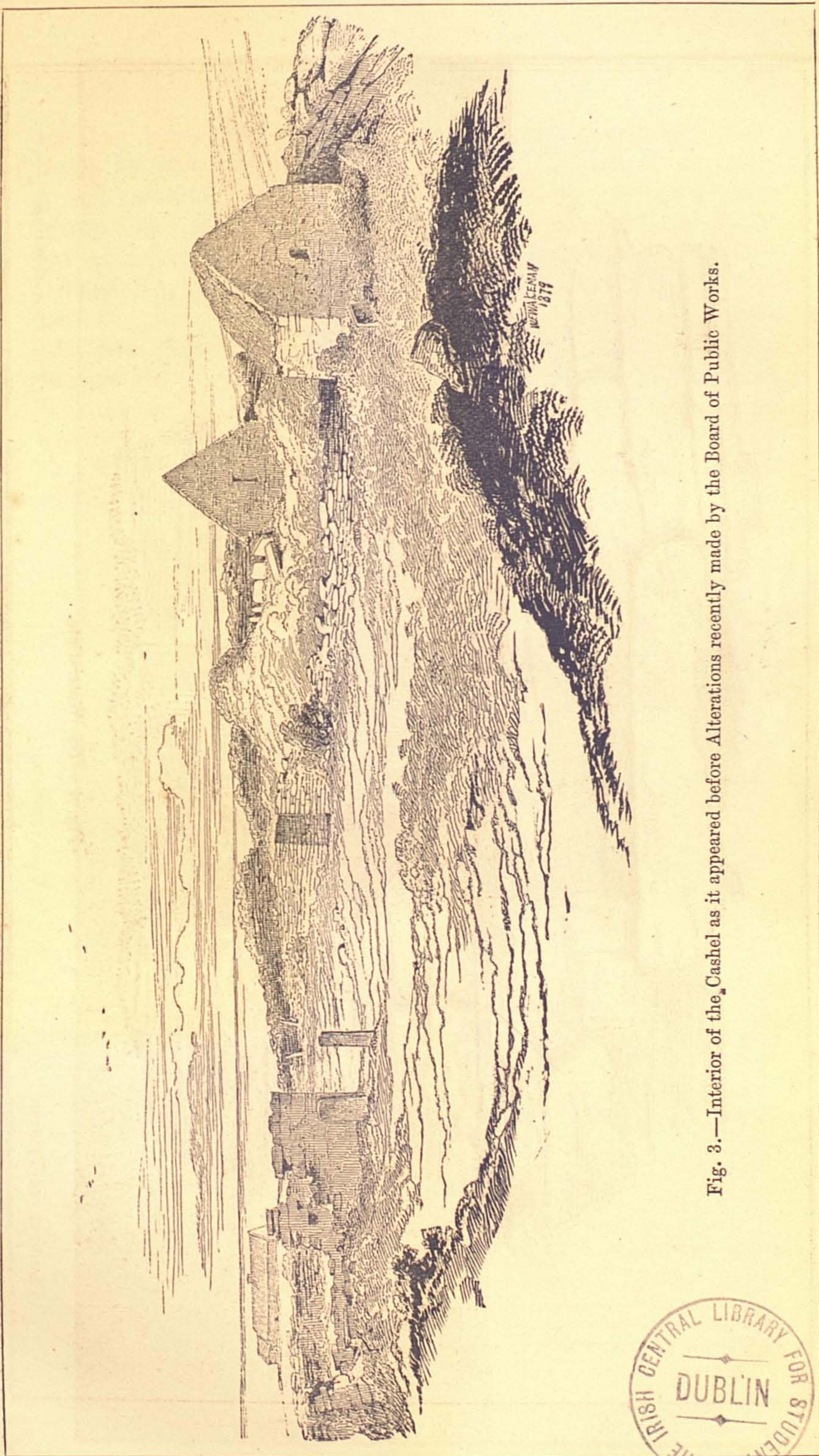


Fig. 3.—Interior of the Cashel as it appeared before Alterations recently made by the Board of Public Works.



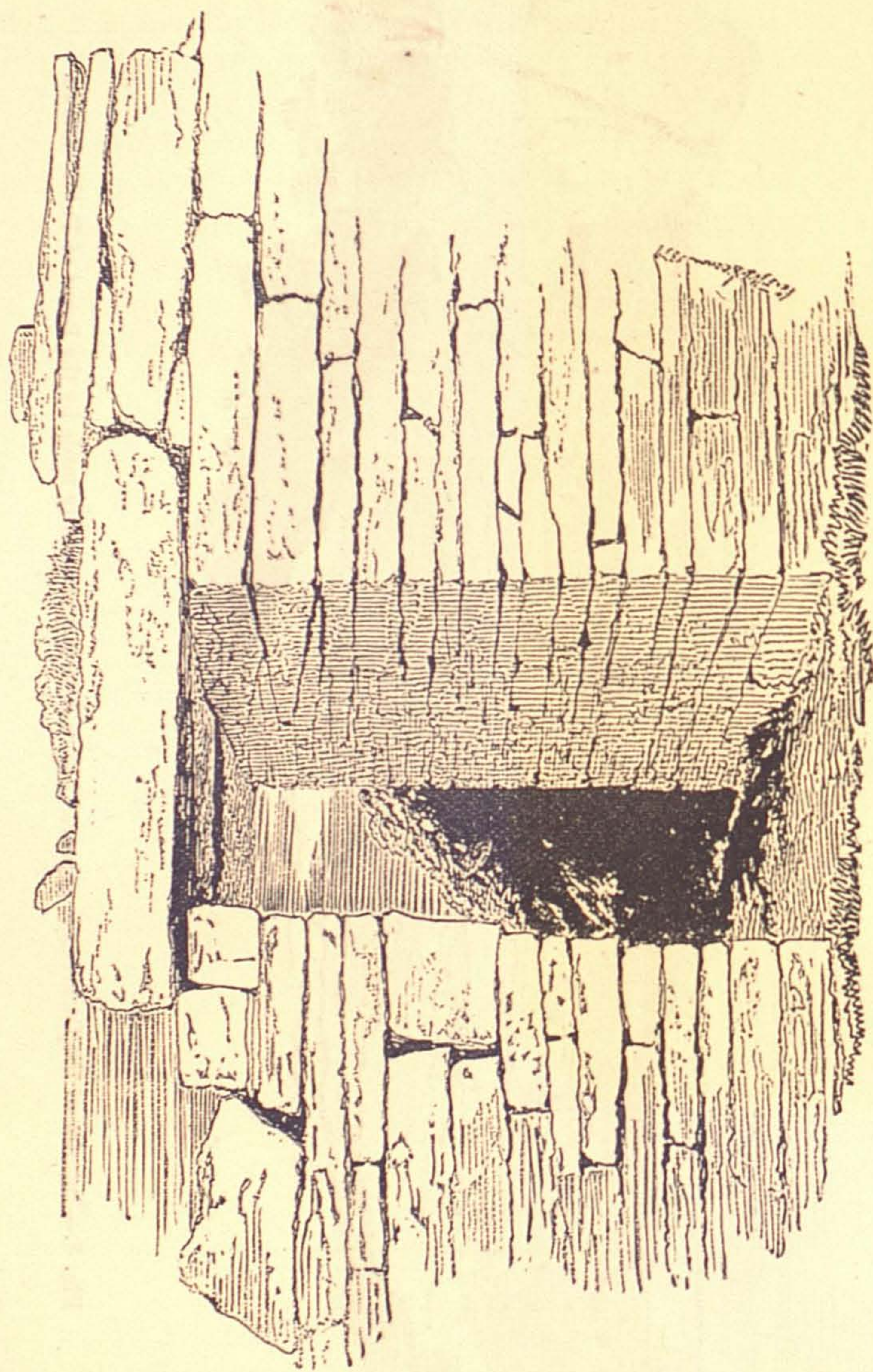


Fig. 4.—The Water-Gate.

natives recovered from the sea are conveyed for interment in the *enceinte*. The stones of which it is composed are comparatively small, as may be judged from a glance at the foregoing illustration, which is a faithful representation of the external appearance of this interesting portal. Its dimensions are—height, six feet three inches; breadth at top, three feet; at bottom, three feet five inches. Its depth is seven feet, which of course is here the thickness of the wall. The southern entrance is a thing of yesterday, having, together with a large portion of the adjoining wall, been erected *in toto* by the men commissioned by the Board of Works as conservators.¹

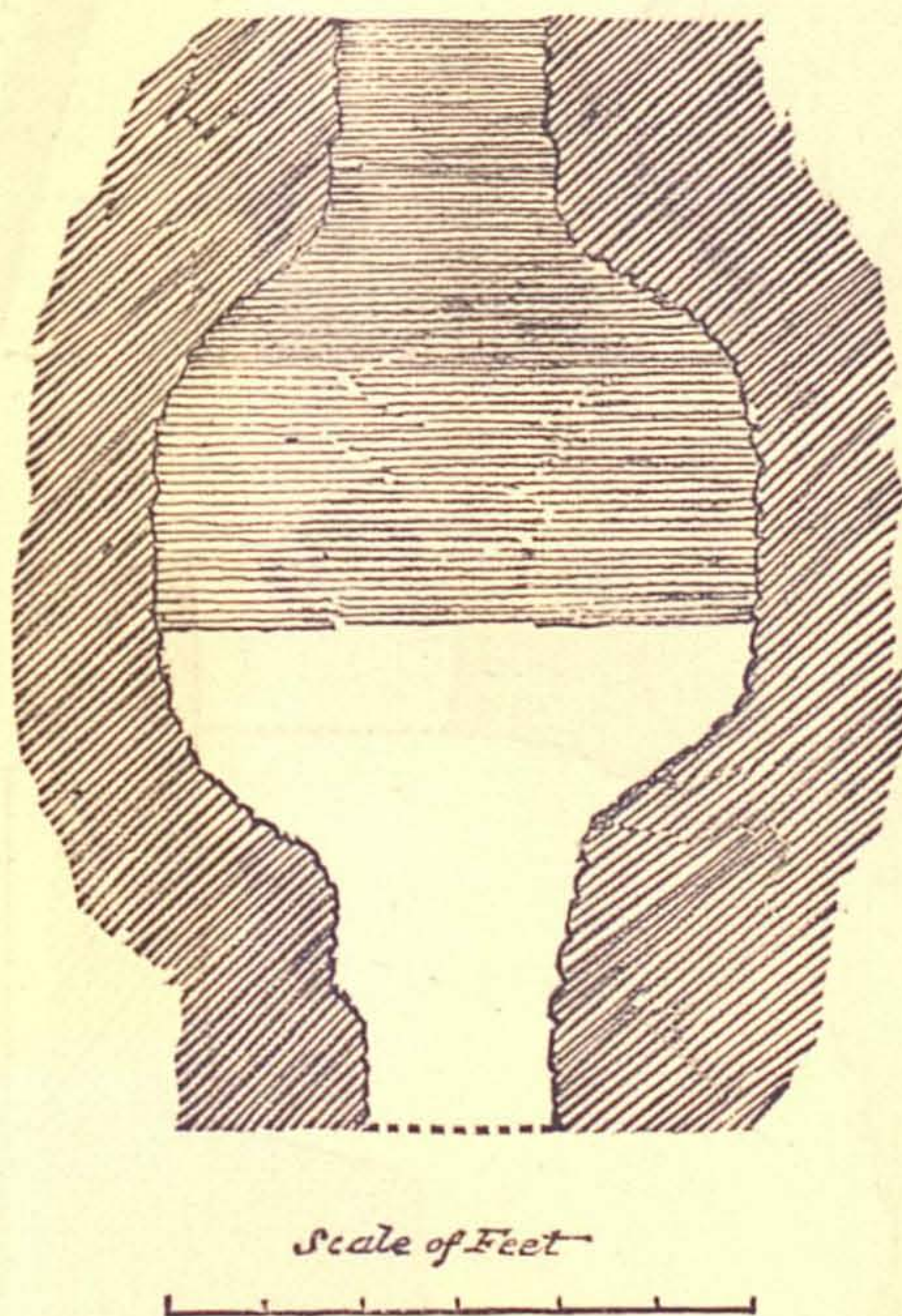


Fig. 5.—Ground-plan of Low Entrance.

Upon the north-western curve of the wall are two other entrances which, for many reasons, claim parti-

¹ This feature, when the stones become somewhat weathered and lichened, will remain a mockery, a delusion, and pro-

bably a snare, to future inquiring antiquaries. Its dimensions need not be here noted.

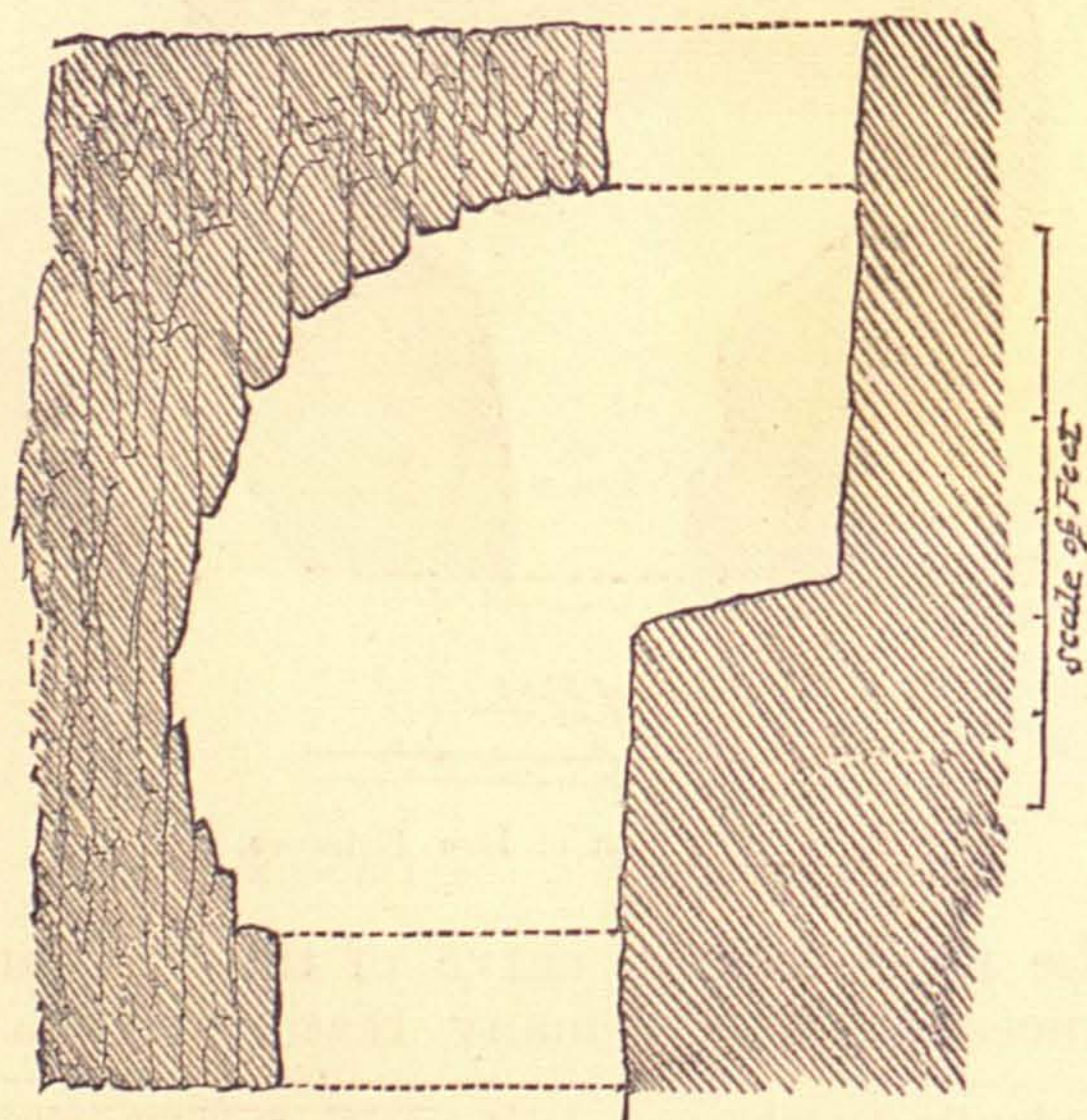


Fig. 6.—Section of Low Entrance. No. 1.

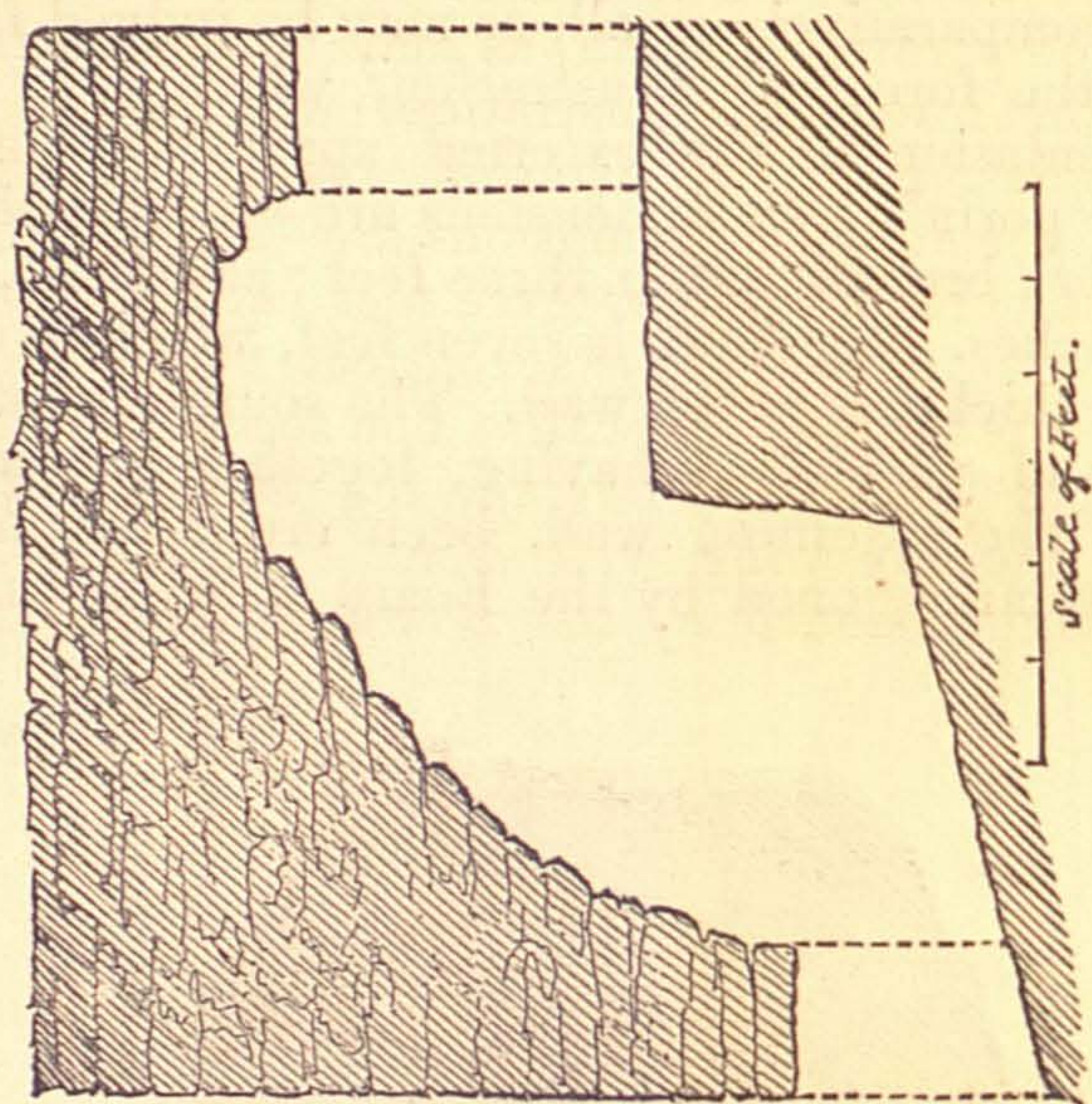


Fig. 7.—Section of Low Entrance. No. 2.

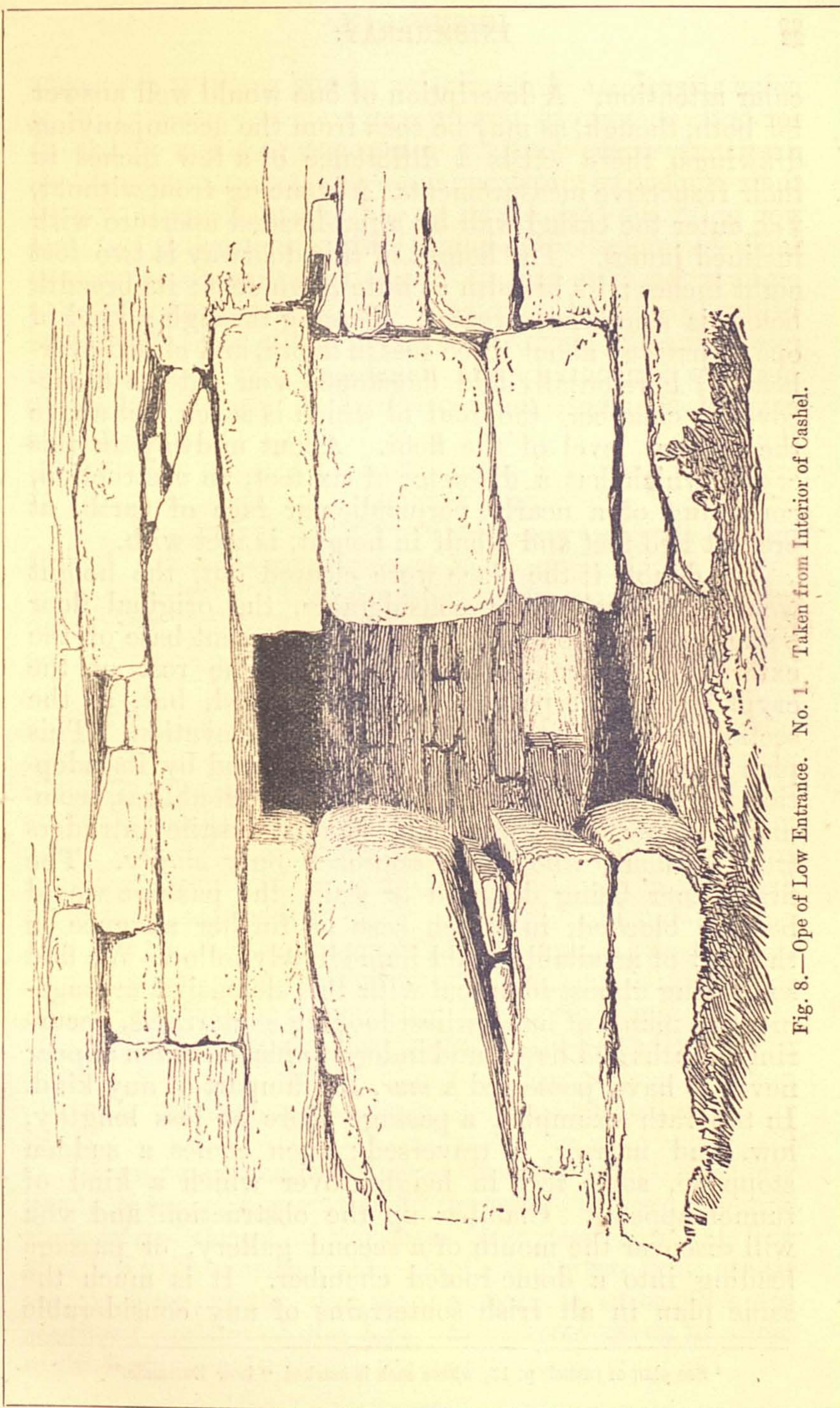


Fig. 8.—Ope of Low Entrance. No. 1. Taken from Interior of Cashel.

cular attention.¹ A description of one would well answer for both, though, as may be seen from the accompanying drawings, there exists a difference of a few inches in their respective measurements. Advancing from without, you enter the cashel wall by a flat-headed aperture with inclined jambs. The height of this doorway is two feet eight inches; its breadth at lintel, two feet; its breadth below is somewhat greater. Passing through a kind of ope or passage about three feet in depth, and closed overhead by horizontally-laid flagstones, you enter a dome-covered chamber, the roof of which is seven feet above the present level of the floor. About midway in this crypt, which has a diameter of six feet, an obstruction, consisting of a nearly perpendicular face of earth, at present two feet and a-half in height, is met with.

No doubt, if the place were cleared out, the height would be much more considerable, the original floor being probably on a level with the present base of the external entrance, or even lower. The rest of the crypt is a counterpart of that just passed, but, as the sections show, with a floor of higher elevation. This plan of construction is very ingenious, and by its adoption defenders of the passage would, doubtless, command ample vantage-ground against hostile intruders from without, who could approach only singly. The first comer being disabled or slain, the passage would become blocked, in which case no further advance on the part of assailants could immediately follow. We find something almost identical with this defensive arrangement in many of our earliest-looking souterrains, occurring in raths and lisses, and indeed in places which appear never to have possessed a *mur*, or rampart of any kind. In the rath examples, a passage more or less lengthy, low, and narrow, is traversed; then comes a sudden stoppage, some feet in height, over which a kind of tunnel appears. Clamber up the obstruction and you will discover the mouth of a second gallery, or passage leading into a dome-roofed chamber. It is much the same plan in all Irish souterrains of any considerable

¹ See plan of cashel, p. 13, where each is marked "Low Entrance."

size. Sir William Wilde, in his work on *Lough Corrib*, p. 205, has given a measured plan and section, accompanied by a description of one of these curious remains occurring in the neighbourhood of Moytura, as also of a second example at *Cooslughoga*, "the rat's foot," in the same neighbourhood. The latter exhibits several signs of very great antiquity, one of its side-walls being composed of large upright flagstones, "not unlike those that support the roof of the passage into New Grange; and, like those of that remarkable structure, some of them are indented with artificial depressions along their sides and edges."

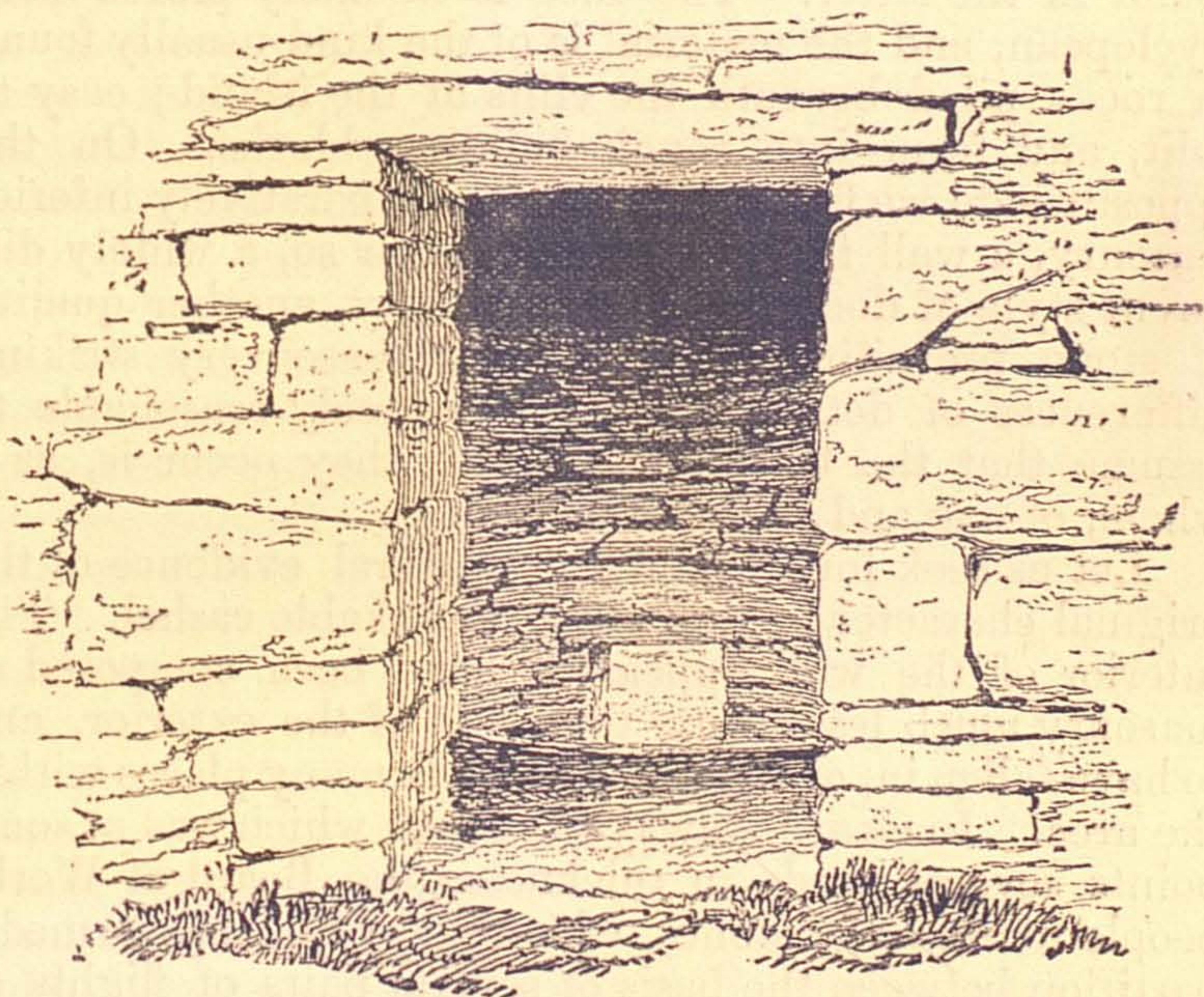


Fig. 9.—Ope of Low Entrance. No. 2. Taken from Interior of Cashel.

These two so-called "low entrances" are about thirty yards apart. That portion of the cashel's curve in which they occur varies in thickness from eleven to thirteen feet. At the openings the depth is eleven feet, while the thickness of the wall on the opposite, or eastern and southern portion of the fort, varies from seven to about eight feet.

Although neither O'Donovan nor Lord Dunraven appear to have noticed these most remarkable entrances, or to have compared their architectural exhibits with those of the comparatively better-known Water-gate, yet his Lordship did not fail to remark the striking differences in point of thickness, quality, and geological character of masonry, size and arrangement of the stones, which appear when the north-western and south-eastern portions of the fort are fairly examined and compared one with the other. The former segment of the wall's curve is composed of blocks of larger size, better selected, and more skilfully laid, than are to be found in the latter. The face is in many places truly Cyclopean, and the material is of the kind usually found in rocks piled beneath the cliffs of the island; easy to split, and form into rough building blocks. On the opposite side we find small stones, comparatively inferior masonry, a wall thinner by five feet or so, a widely different style of doorway, and, generally, another quality of stone prevailing. Considering these very striking differences of detail, it would be scarcely reasonable to assume that the building in which they occur is, as a whole, of one and the same period.

Let us seek for further architectural evidence of the original character of this most remarkable cashel. The interior of the wall appears to have been composed of masonry much less strong than that of the exterior, and to have fallen in, or crumbled down in many places within the area. In clearing away the *débris*, which was at some points several yards in thickness, the Board of Works people found large stones, which had evidently formed a partition between the basis of several pairs of flights of steps, or inclines which, as we may judge from three happily-remaining examples, led from the ground to the summit of the wall, where there was, no doubt, anciently a parapet or breastwork of some kind. When the late Earl of Dunraven, in company with Miss Stokes, some years ago visited Inismurray, the steps, or inclines referred to, owing to the accumulation of stones and rubbish which had fallen upon them, were scarcely visible.

Surely the presence of these arrangements, which form

so striking a feature in the grand military fortresses of Aran, as in Dun Aengus and Dun Connor, in Staig Fort, Kerry, in Caher Gall, Galway, and elsewhere, must be considered as stamping on Inismurray cashel a purely fortress and unmonastic character. A handful of ecclesiastics and students, such as the island in its most prosperous days might have sustained, could never have dreamt of manning a wall of proportions like those of this structure; and in the "low entrances," here for the first time noticed as the original doorways of the cashel, I venture to say, we may recognize features which are more archaic than any usually found in Irish works other than the prehistoric souterrain.

Let us for a moment just consider bare possibilities. Is it likely that in the sixth century any Irish saint, however powerful in a worldly point of view, would think of undertaking a task like that of erecting round his cell, and possibly an adjoining church, and a few bee-hive houses, a *mur* or cashel with a wall at least twenty feet high, varying in thickness from fifteen to seven feet, pierced by cunningly-devised and elaborate doorways, furnished with a series of steps leading to the summit of the rampart, having within the substance of the wall several chambers, and within the enclosure lines of covered passages leading to crypts and souterrains like those, in olden time, constructed for concealment or defence by Firbolgian or Tuatha de Danaan tribes? Could he have done so had he so desired? How many masons and other artificers, and what time, would it take to collect the necessary material and complete such a structure? What would be the use of a fortress to men untrained to martial exercise, even if their number was sufficient to watch and guard the gates and defend the wall?

It is greatly to be deplored that when rebuilding or refacing a considerable portion of the cashel wall, the Board of Works "conservers" appear to have mistaken certain spaces between the inclines (see points marked A and B respectively in the annexed sketch) for the bases of niches. The wall should not have been meddled with. It would have been enough just to clear its base

of fallen stones and rubbish. As it is, in the "restoration" certain niche-like recesses, for which there is no precedent or authority, extending from the ground to the summit of the wall, have been constructed. To add, if possible, to the absurdity of this modern design, within each recess¹ has been deposited a cross-inscribed memorial stone which should never have been removed from the grave over which it had stood, or lain, for perhaps a thousand years, or more.

Unlike Dun Aengus and some other of the great Aran forts which stand upon naked rock, the Inismurray cashel has within and around it some soil, shallow indeed, but of depth sufficient to admit of covered ways being constructed beneath its surface. Any attempt to trace the plan of these souterrains would be fiercely resisted by the islanders, the enclosure of the cashel having for many centuries been used as a cemetery.

It will be observed on reference to the plan that the area of the cashel is divided by stone barriers into four divisions of unequal size. These works bear all the marks of extreme age, and there can be little doubt that they form an integral portion of the fort as it was originally planned. Their use may have been twofold. Supposing the place carried by an enemy, the defenders would in these walls possess admirable bulwarks, from the shelter of which it would be a difficult task to drive them, while they themselves might still be in a position to prolong the struggle, and probably in the end drive away the invader. Within their substance, too, might be constructed cells like those which are not unfrequently found beneath the soil in the enclosure of stone or earthen forts of early days. Some such arrangement may here be traced in more places than one; but through the sapping and mining of the revenue men amongst the stones, in search of illicit whiskey, they have become almost entirely ruined.

The main wall of the cashel contains several little chambers of a similar character. For what purpose they were intended it is difficult to say. At a short distance to

¹ Could the Board of Works "restorer" have taken the recesses for "stations"—mistaken pagan for Christian architecture?—W. M.

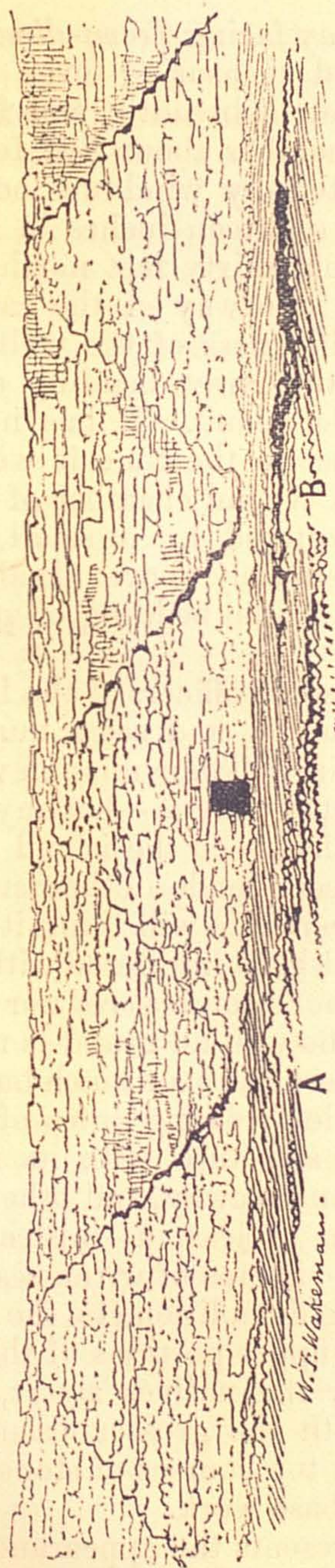


Fig. 10.—Interior of Cashel Wall, North-west side, showing Inclines, or Steps to Summit.

the west of the doorway facing *Teampull-na-Teinidh* occurs a chamber of this kind, measuring seven feet six inches in length, by five feet in breadth, and four in height. Near it is a second chamber about five feet square, and four in height, lighted by windows looking outward. This aperture is but eighteen inches in height, by two feet in breadth. About thirty feet northward from the newly-built southern doorway of the cashel there is a small room in the thickness of the wall, which is used as a receptacle for the straw bedding of such of the natives as die upon the island. It has no name, nor is there any tradition as to the time it was first applied to its present use. A second chamber of the same kind, oval in form, and entered by a small square-headed doorway, occurs immediately above. It also is filled with rotten straw, remains of the bedding of persons interred within the cashel.

In the year 1880 some officers of the Board of Public Works visited Inismurray, and set a numerous staff to work at the several ruins. Their mission was to conserve—at least it was expected to be so—but any true antiquary or ecclesiologist who had seen the island remains before certain changes had been made in their style and appearance by the “conservers” (!) will think it a pity that the various structures had been interfered with. The cashel, for instance, has neither been *restored* nor *conserved*, it has been *transformed*. The wall all round is now of a nearly uniform height. There has been much building up; and there has been no little throwing down of original work, so that at present the structure, with its newly-designed and erected Cyclopean gateway, and other incongruities, must be looked upon at least as misleading to future antiquarian students. Scores of witnesses to the fact are ready to testify to the demolition (to the extent of from three to four feet) of upper portions of the ancient work. This levelling down, the natives assert, was to enable the “conservers” with the greater ease to themselves, to level up. Ancient top courses of stones were required as materials for new base work.

The wall now presents the appearance of a gigantic tub or vat, at least when viewed from a little distance.

No one in future will ever be able to say, exactly, what was the height of the cashel wall in A.D. 1880, unless, indeed, some memoranda from the note-books of tourists may yet crop up. Levellers are not likely to have recorded measurements of heights in portions of the demolished work; but, within a foot or two, native recollection may, for a generation, be relied upon.

“Do not let us talk of restoration,” writes Ruskin, in his *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. “The thing is a lie from beginning to end. More has been gleaned out of desolated Nineveh than ever will be out of rebuilt Milan. It is no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them—they are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us. The dead still have their right in them. . . . It matters not whether in rage, or in deliberate folly, the people who destroy everything causelessly are a mob; and architecture is always destroyed causelessly.”

The Clochans, or Cellæ.—Within the *enceinte* of the cashel, and evidently forming portion of its original plan as a place of habitation, are found three distinctly-developed structures of the kind often described as “bee-hive houses” or “huts,” and not a few indications of other buildings, more or less cryptic, the exact character of which, owing to ancient, as in some instances to modern, vandalism, cannot be strictly defined. The most remarkable of these curious remains is situate at the southern termination of the strong barrier which extends from the northern side of the cashel, and is known amongst the natives as *Toorybrenell* (O’Brenell’s Tower), or the School-house. It is of an oval form, is composed, on the interior, of very large stones, and presents, on the exterior, where the sides and roofing have been somewhat disturbed, much the appearance of a sepulchral mound, or carn. Its internal measurement is about thirteen feet in length; breadth, somewhat less; and height, from floor to apex of vault, fourteen feet.

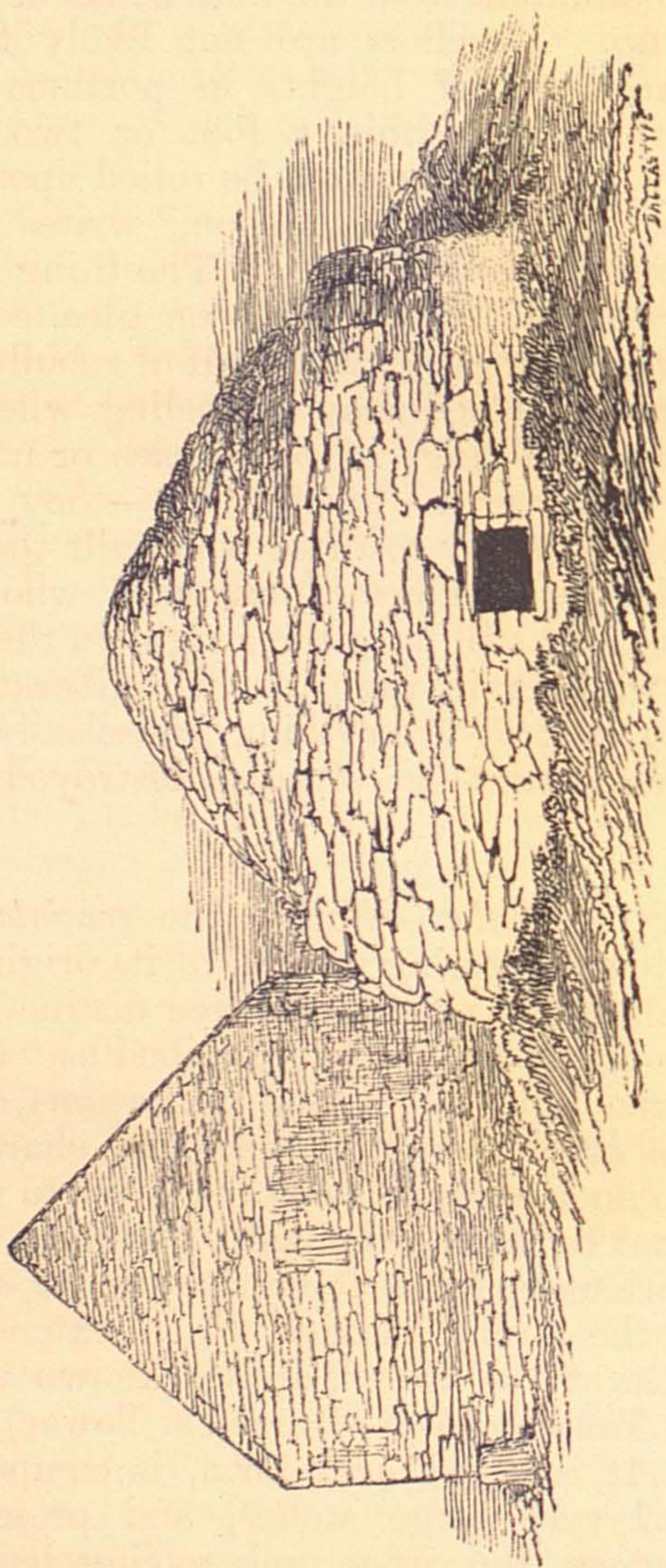


Fig. 11.—*Toorybrenell*, or the School-house.

The walls converge gradually upwards from a little distance above ground; and upon one side is a kind of projecting bench, or seat-like offset, composed of rude masonry, upon which, in all probability, the beds of the ancient occupants were stretched. The aspect of this primitive chamber is not unlike that of a prehistoric burial vault, with this exception, that towards the south side is an ope, measuring one foot in height, and one foot eight inches in breadth, which cannot be said to light the apartment, and was probably designed as a passage for air or smoke. The style of the entrance is truly archaic, even Cyclopean, and interestingly contrasts with that of the well-finished doorways of the adjoining churches. In no part of this building, nor in the other cells which I shall have occasion to notice, is there a trace of hammered or cut stone, or of cement or mortar of any kind. Indeed it is impossible to believe that these *clochans*, or cellæ, and the churches were contemporaneously erected. The height of this ope is three feet eight inches; the breadth at top, one foot nine inches; and at bottom, two feet two inches. It will be observed that the inclination of the jambs is in this instance exceptionally great. The sketch represents the portal as seen from the interior, and framing, as it were, a view of the southern entrance to the *Teampull-na-Teinidh*.

Trahaun-a-Chorrees.—A second cell, which bears the above name, occupies a place within the cashel, close to the Water-gate. It is formed, like the School-house, of large unhammered stones laid together without any cement. In plan, it may be described as an oval, or an oblong with the angles rounded off, and having at its southern end a second chamber, or kind of ante-room, which is entered from the larger apartment by a very small, low, square-headed doorway. The length of the principal chamber is, on the interior, about seven feet; it is difficult to determine the dimensions of the smaller one, as many of its parts have fallen, and the place appears to be more or less blocked up with rubbish. The principal doorway, of which an



Fig. 12.—Doorway of *Toorybrenell*, or the School-house, from the Interior.



Fig. 13.—*Trahaun-a-Chorrees*, or the Lent Trahaun.

illustration is here presented, exhibits unmistakable characteristics of extreme antiquity. It is in height three feet eight inches; in breadth at the lintel, one foot ten inches, and at the bottom two feet five inches. The name *Trahaun-a-Chorrees* signifies the Lent Trahaun, or place of prayer, and the islanders have a tradition that it was here the monks were accustomed to assemble for vespers. It is difficult to conceive how they could have sung, at least with any effect, in so small a place; but probably the *trahaun* was only so used by them as a temporary refuge during the prevalence of severe weather. When singing their vespers they may have occupied the green space which fronts this mysterious structure. The annexed view of the doorway is taken from the interior. Several steps, which have all the appearance of high antiquity, ascend from it to the level of the ground outside. It would thus appear that the site of the *trahaun* had been more or less excavated.

From the Water-gate to a point nearly adjoining the north-eastern end of *Teach Molaise* a wall, at present of inconsiderable height and thickness, extends. This work does not seem to contain any chamber, and the motive of its erection is difficult of explanation. Remains of several passages, or cells, can be traced in the broad barrier which runs from St. Molaise's house to the so-called School-house, or *Toorybrenell*, and from thence, in a curved line, to the southern doorway (lately built) of the cashel. One of these crypts occurs to the north-east of *Teampull-na-Teinidh*, but is now so ruined as to be almost featureless. It seems to be portion of a covered way by which the last-mentioned church was connected with *Teach Molaise*. A description of it in its existing state would almost be an impossibility. Another cell-like ruined chamber may be noticed in the wall-work which abuts on the south-eastern side of the School-house.

No doubt several passages and small crypts, now indistinguishable amongst the *débris* of the larger dividing wall, exist. Indeed portions of several, which were well known to the fathers of the present generation of natives, are still faintly visible. While the smaller cellæ

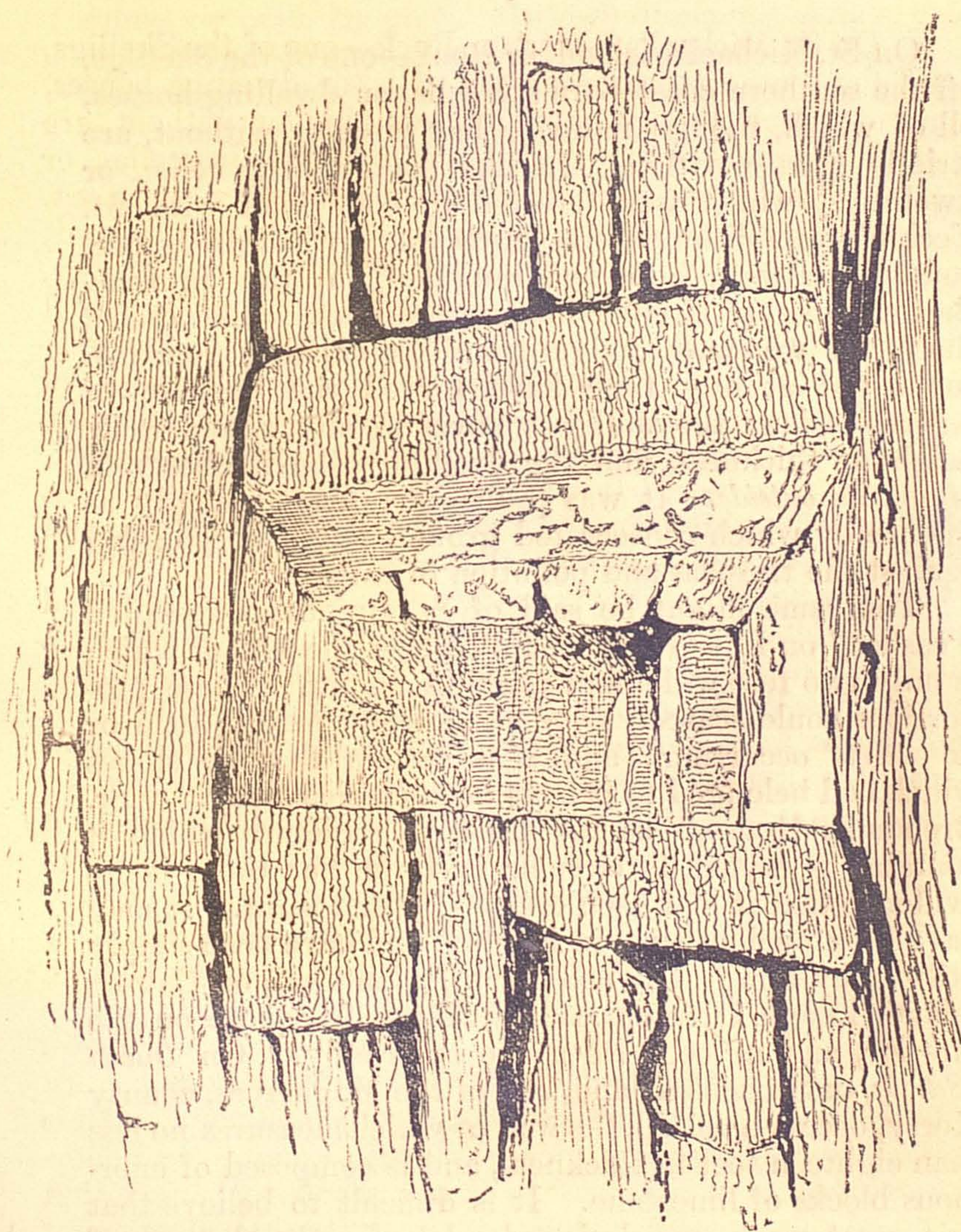


Fig. 14.—Doorway of *Trahaun-a-Chorrees*, or the *Lent Trahaun*, from the Interior.

of the cashel are of irregular form, the larger, as has been stated, are nearly circular or oval in plan, both within and without—never square.

On St. Michael's Island, or Rock—one of the Skelligs, off the southern coast—are six cells, or dwelling-houses, all of which, though more or less circular without, are strictly square within. In like manner, the cellæ, or dwellings, which were erected in connexion with St. Fechin's establishment on *Ardoiléan*, or High Island, county Galway, are quadrangular on the interior, though roughly circular in external plan. The cashel there, as we may judge from its existing remains, could not at any time have served the purpose of a fortification; the wall was never of any considerable height or thickness, and the dwellings, be it observed, are on its *outside*. It was probably intended simply as a fence by which consecrated ground might be guarded against the trespass and pollution of cattle.

The same might be said of St. Brendan's so-called "cashel" on Inis Gloria, county Mayo, the wall of which is only two feet wide, and three in height. These proportions could scarcely ever have been greater, little or no *débris* occurring; and it is certain that no stones which had belonged to it have been carried away. "St. Brendan's House," as the bee-hive structure which it contains is styled, is circular in form, but there is no evidence that it had been erected by that saint. It may have been ancient even in his day, and have been simply utilized by him. The cell of St. Finan Cam, on Church Island, Lough Curraun, county Kerry, is square on the interior, and of bee-hive shape externally. On *Oiléan tSenaig*, or Senach's Island, one of the Magherees, county Kerry, occurs a cashel, the wall of which measures no less than eighteen feet in thickness, and is composed of enormous blocks of limestone. It is difficult to believe that this great work was designed solely for the defence of the two diminutive oratories and the three bee-hive huts which it encloses. We have seen that primitive ecclesiastical cashels of undoubted character were of extremely light construction; but here, as on Inismurray,

we find a wall of enormous thickness, which must have taken much time, cost, and labour, to erect, enclosing *clochans*, rudely built of uncemented stones, and circular, or oval, in plan. I think it can be shown that at least the great majority of the cellæ of our primitive Churchmen were internally of a quadrangular form; and it seems to be pretty certain that prehistoric *clochans*, like the duns, cashels, lisses, or cahers, with which they are so frequently found associated, were almost without exception, more or less circular or oval in plan. If this be so, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we have much reason to believe that the Inismurray cashel, and the unmortared cellæ which it encloses, belong to ante-Christian times in Ireland, and were simply utilized, not erected, by the community of St. Molaise, or by other Churchmen.

Teach-an-alais, or the *Sweat-House*.¹—For various reasons it seems desirable that a notice of the very curious, and perhaps unique, building which lies close to the cashel wall, to the northward, should here be given. I allude to a stone-roofed structure, in plan somewhat of a horseshoe form, which would seem to the architectural eye to be as ancient as any work remaining upon the island. It is styled by the natives, who evidently know how to call a spade a spade, simply *Teach-an-alais*, or, in English, the “Sweat-house;” and the tradition is that the place was used in olden time in the way that far-Eastern baths were tens of centuries ago; as formerly, in Britain, were Roman baths; and as the so-called Turkish baths are, even now, with us.

The above remarks had been penned, and the manuscript was already in the printer’s hands, when Professor Hennessy, of the Science and Art Department, was good enough to furnish me with the following interesting memorandum:—

“It is remarkable that what are called Turkish baths in Ireland and Great Britain have been designated Roman-Irish baths in Germany and Bohemia. I saw baths designated ‘Römische-Irische Bäder’ at Prague and Nuremberg in 1879.”—H. HENNESSY, F.R.S.

¹ See note at end.

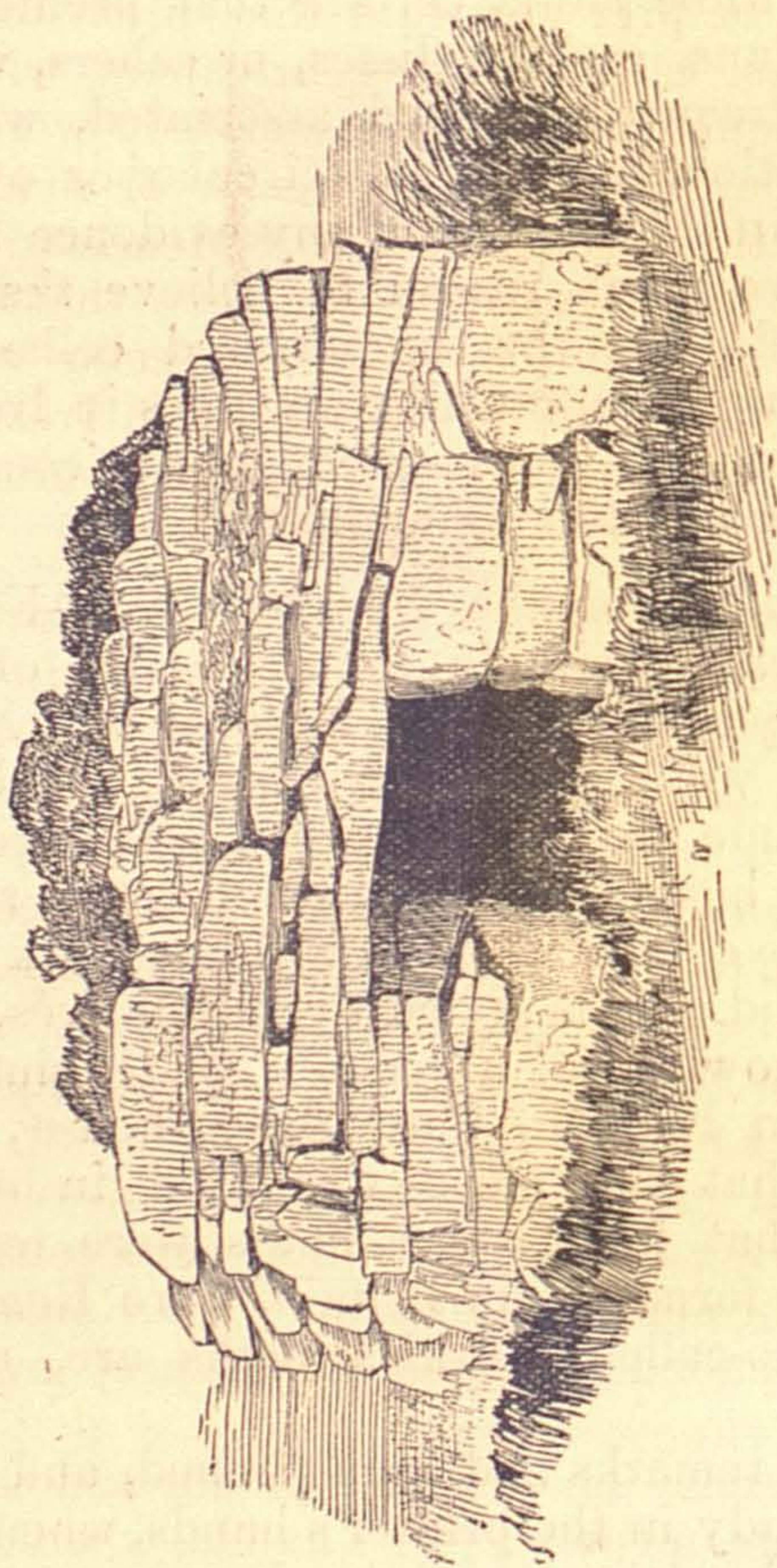


Fig. 15.—*Teach-an-alais*, or the Sweat-house. (See pp. 37 and 39.)

The, structure which is composed of large stones, set without mortar or cement, measures internally about five feet and a-half, by four feet two inches. The floor being covered with stones and rubbish, it is difficult to determine the height of the apartment. The distance from ground to roof was probably about five feet. There is but one aperture—a doorway, measuring at present two feet in height, by two in width. It is square-headed, with slightly-inclined jambs.

THE CHURCHES.

Teach Molaise.—The cashel contains three small churches, or oratories, which are styled *Teach Molaise*, *Teampull-na-Bfear* (this building is also occasionally called *Teampull Molaise*, and, sometimes, the *Monastery*), and *Teampull* or *Teach-na-Teinidh*, respectively. The most remarkable, and the best preserved, of these interesting structures is the first named. It is called after the patron saint of the island (the word *teach* signifying in the Irish language a church, as well as a house), and is probably the most ancient building of its class remaining in a perfect state of preservation. It is of extremely small proportions, measuring, internally, but eight feet ten inches and a-half in length, by seven feet ten inches in breadth. The side-walls are of great thickness, in order to sustain a roof of stone which still remains unimpaired, though the storms and frosts of fully twelve hundred years have done their worst upon it. In plan it is a simple quadrangle, entered by a doorway situate in its western end, and lighted by a single window placed in the opposite gable at a considerable distance above the level of the ground. The walls are composed of stones, generally of large size, set in somewhat irregular courses; all except those forming the doorway and window casings being rough and unhewn. The masonry, nevertheless, is in style much less rude than that of the cashel, or of the bee-hive houses; and mortar composed of lime, made apparently from sea shells, was freely used throughout the building. Owing to the fact of the roof being externally overspread with

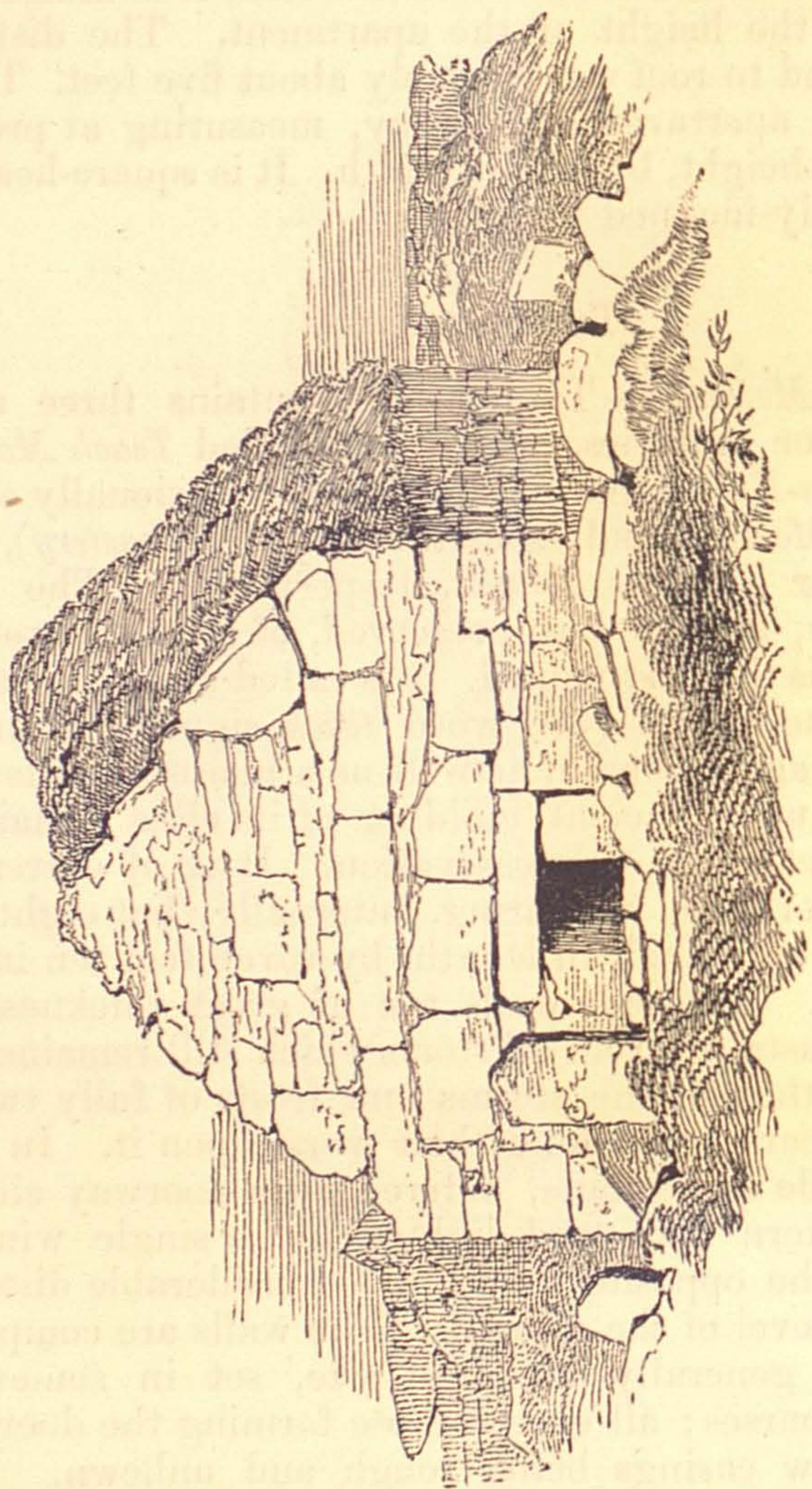


Fig. 16.—South-west View of Teach Molaise.

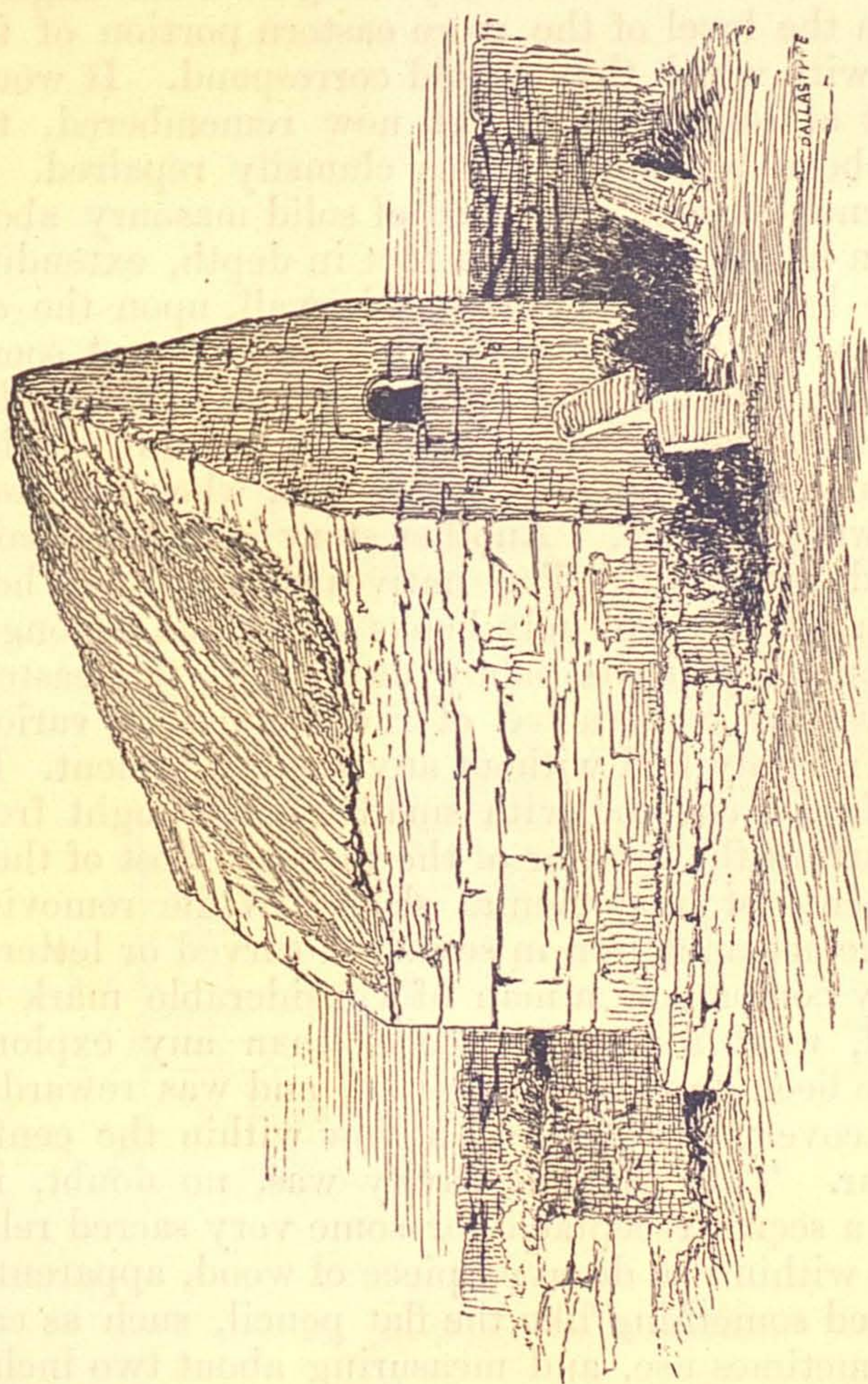


Fig. 17.—South-east View of Teach Molaise.

vegetable matter, and lined on the interior with a thick coating of cement, it is impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty the manner in which the stones of which it is built are laid. The upper part of the western gable and some feet of the adjoining roof are slightly lower than the level of the more eastern portion of the building, with which they should correspond. It would seem that at some period, not now remembered, the roof had been broken, and was clumsily repaired. A kind of bench or seat, composed of solid masonry about two feet in height, and over a foot in depth, extending the entire length of the south side-wall, upon the exterior, forms a unique feature in this building. A somewhat similar offset occurs in the interior, and is styled by the natives the "Saint's Bed," from a tradition that it served as a sleeping bench to Molaise, when this *teach* was his dwelling-place. Another story is that the saint lies buried within it. The natives declare that here are hidden a number of holy books which had belonged to the monastery in its palmy days.¹ At the eastern end is an altar constructed of rude stones of various sizes, and roughly laid without any kind of cement. Its upper surface is covered with small flags brought from various parts of the interior of the cashel. Most of these are fragments of monumental slabs. While removing some of the accumulation in search of carved or lettered stones, my companion, a man of considerable mark on the island, went somewhat deeper than any explorer had before been known to penetrate, and was rewarded by the discovery of a cist-like hollow within the centre of the altar. This singular cavity was, no doubt, intended as a secret receptacle for some very sacred relic. We found within it a decayed piece of wood, apparently yew, shaped something like the flat pencil, such as carpenters sometimes use, and measuring about two inches in length. This we reverently returned to the cist, over which we replaced the stones, leaving the altar just in its usual condition.

The doorway, which measures four feet seven inches in height, and one foot nine inches in breadth, is formed

¹ See *ante*, p. 7.

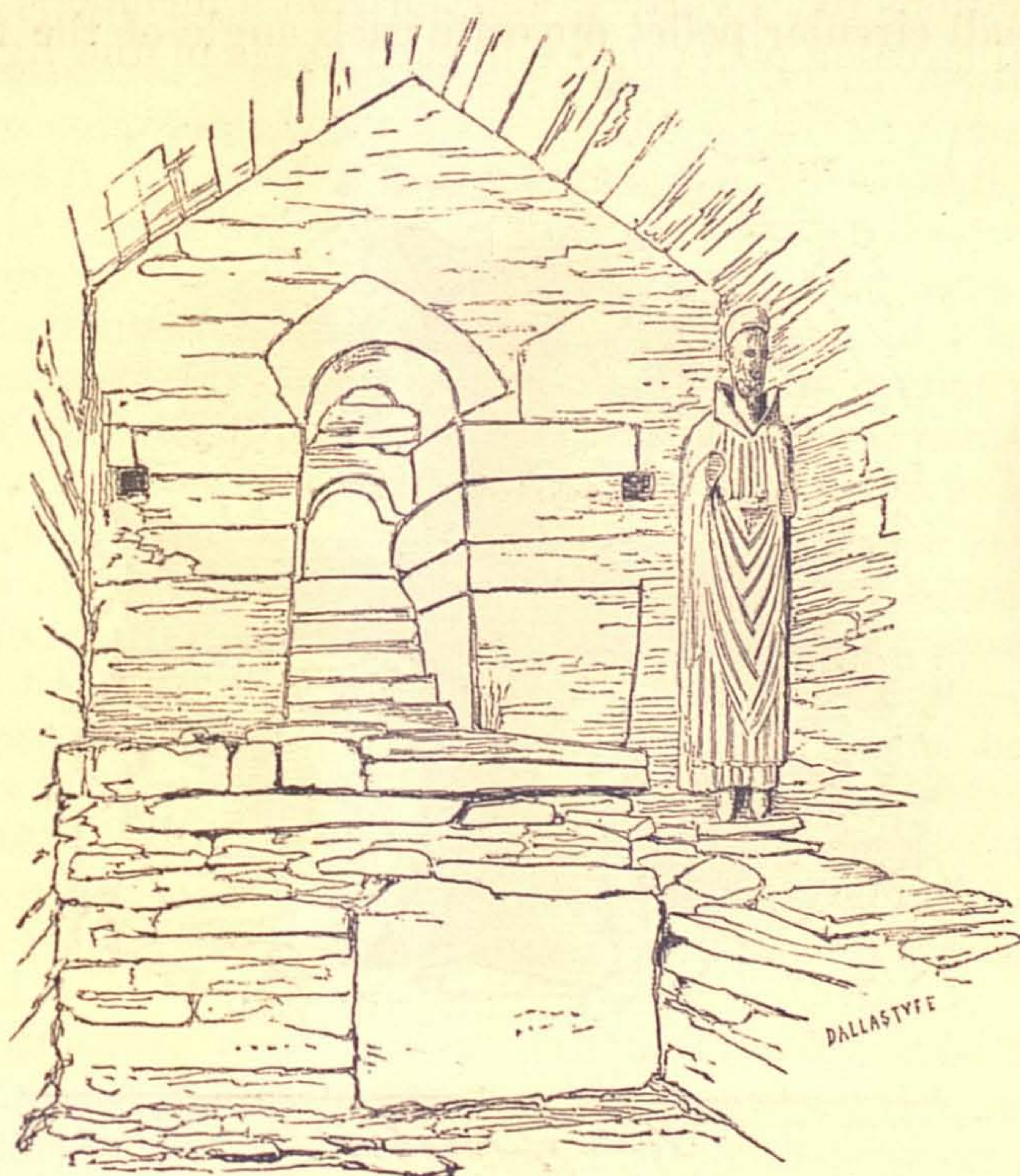


Fig. 18.—Interior of *Teach Molaise*.

of well-cut stones carefully fitted together. Most of them extend through the entire thickness of the wall. Its sides are quite vertical, a circumstance worthy of remark, as opes of this early flat-headed class are almost invariably narrower at the top than at the base. Upon the exterior face of the lintel, over the centre of the entrance, is inscribed a cross of the Greek pattern, but with bifurcated terminations to its vertical and horizontal members, and a small circular pellet opposite each angle of the figure.

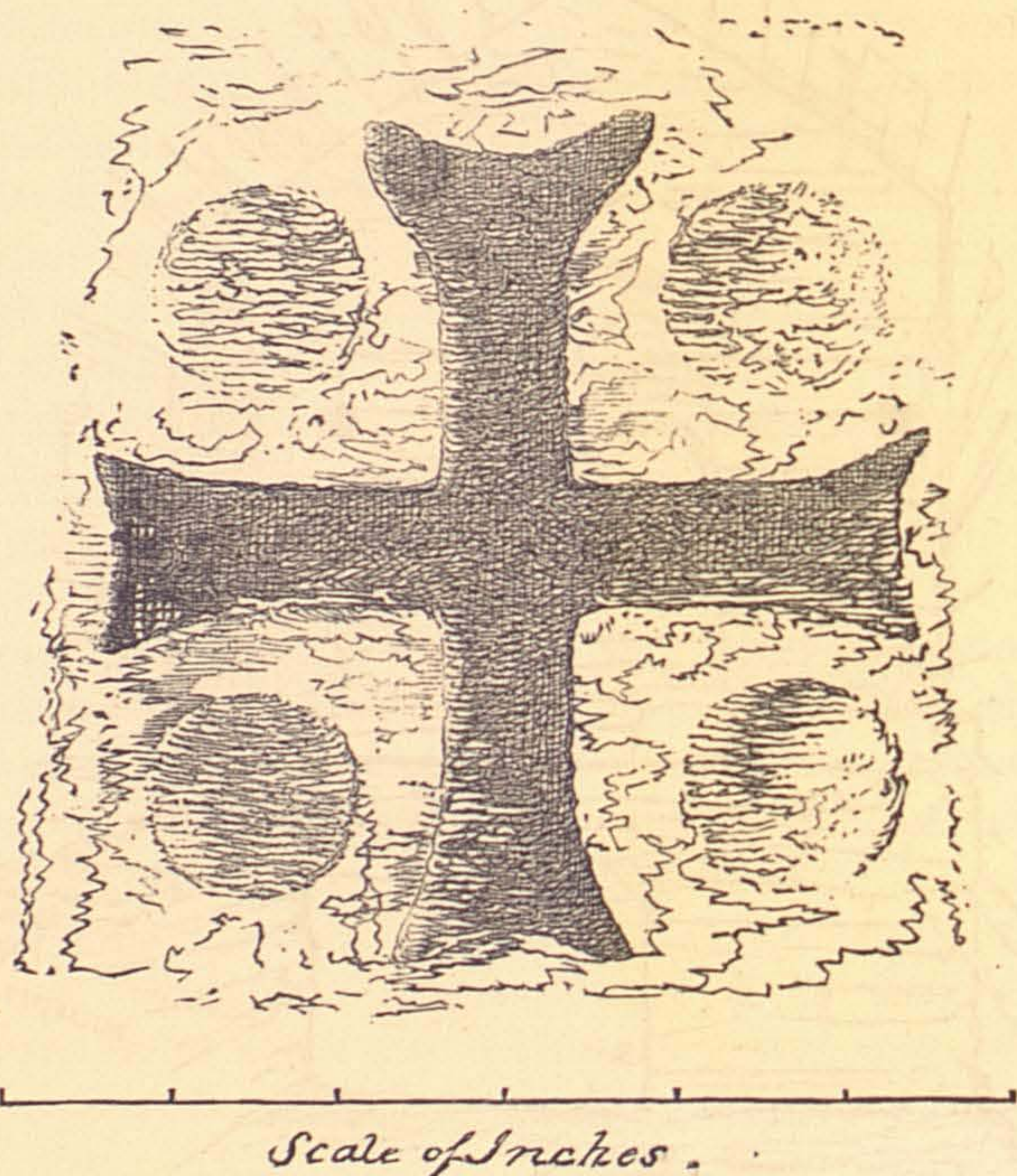


Fig. 19.—Cross on Lintel of Door, *Teach Molaise*.

This form of cross is one of the very earliest known to students of Irish, and, I believe, of Eastern, Christian symbols. A carving somewhat similar, enclosed within a circle, occurs upon the doorway lintel of the grand old church of St. Fechin at Fore, county Westmeath. A few other like instances might be mentioned. It is seen, perhaps, in a later form upon the doorway of Antrim Round Tower. All the church doorways upon which it

is exhibited are of a primitive type. It is a curious circumstance that this cross appears to have remained unobserved by O'Donovan, Petrie, Lord Dunraven, and other writers who have more or less described the peculiarities of *Teach Molaise*. So far as I am aware, it is here for the first time referred to. The accompanying engraving has been faithfully reduced from a rubbing, and a drawing leisurely made by myself while I still had the subject in view. Its dimensions can be ascertained by reference to the scale which accompanies the illustration.

The only window in the structure, as already stated, is placed in the eastern gable, right over the altar, from the table of which it seems to spring. Like the doorway, it is composed of very large stones, nearly all extending through the thickness of the wall. Its semicircular head is not constructed on the principle of the arch, but has been carved out of one, or rather out of a pair of stones. The jambs incline greatly upwards, and there is a considerable splay. From the base of the interior to the exterior of the light are four step-like ledges surmounted by a bevel, as shown in the sketch. The outer measurements of this window are—height, to curve of arch, one foot four inches; one foot three inches wide at base, and one foot one inch at commencement of arch. Round the exterior of the ope is a kind of recessed fillet, the only example of merely decorative carving (if we except the cross on the lintel) which the building presents.

On Sundays and holidays the natives use this, the reputed dwelling and oratory of their patron saint, as a place of prayer and meditation. Notwithstanding the narrowness of its proportions, the islanders, one and all, are impressed with an idea that the place could never be so filled with worshippers that room might not be found for more.

From the projection, or seat, extending along the southern side of *Teach Molaise*, a view comprising nearly the whole of the places of interest embraced by the cashel can be obtained. Almost directly in front is the *Monastery*, as that structure is sometimes styled. Nearly in the same direction are *Cloca-breaca*, and *Altoir beg*,

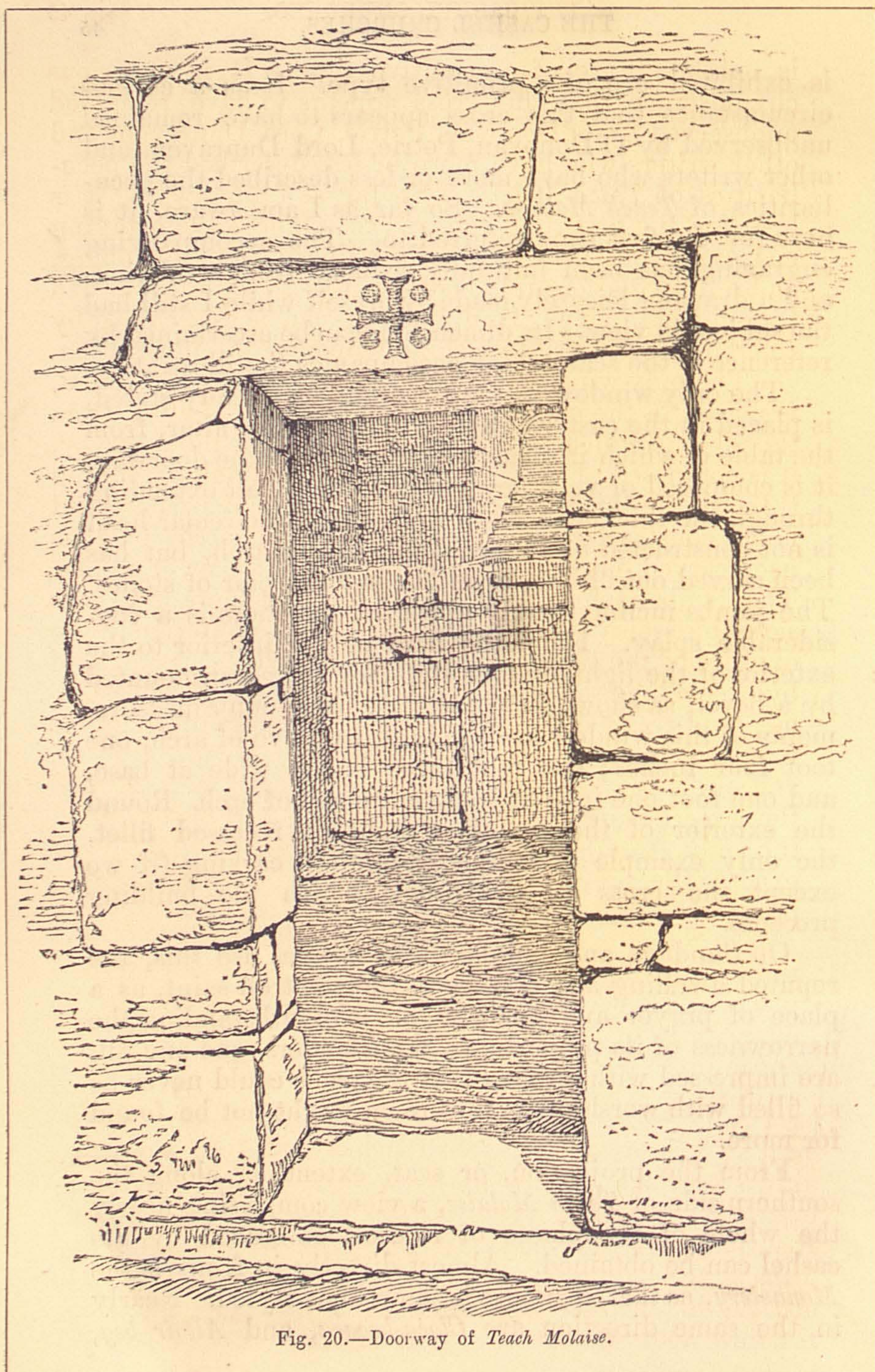


Fig. 20.—Doorway of *Teach Molaise*.

two of the principal stations of the enclosure, as also the remarkable Praying Stones, the Holed Stone, and its companion. Somewhat to the right are *Teach-na-Teinidh*, the Schoolhouse, and other cellæ; and in an opposite direction, the Lent Trahaun, and the Water-gate. The latter was, no doubt, in early days, the portal generally used by all who entered or departed from the sacred bounds. It has lately been stopped up. What strange manner of people must have passed beneath its lintel, from Firbolgian days to our own time; how various their thoughts and aspirations! "Man may come, and man may go," but it remains as ever. We can imagine St. Molaise in company with the fiery, but also saintly, Columba, and a few less distinguished clerics, seated upon the stony bench referred to, counselling, instructing, and directing the "family" under their charge in ghostly matters, or in the execution of mundane works, which the requirements of the monastery from time to time necessitated. Moreover, it was a sheltered spot, no doubt dear to the contemplative mind. The sacred edifices were grouped around, and in front lay rows of cross-marked graves of departed brothers.

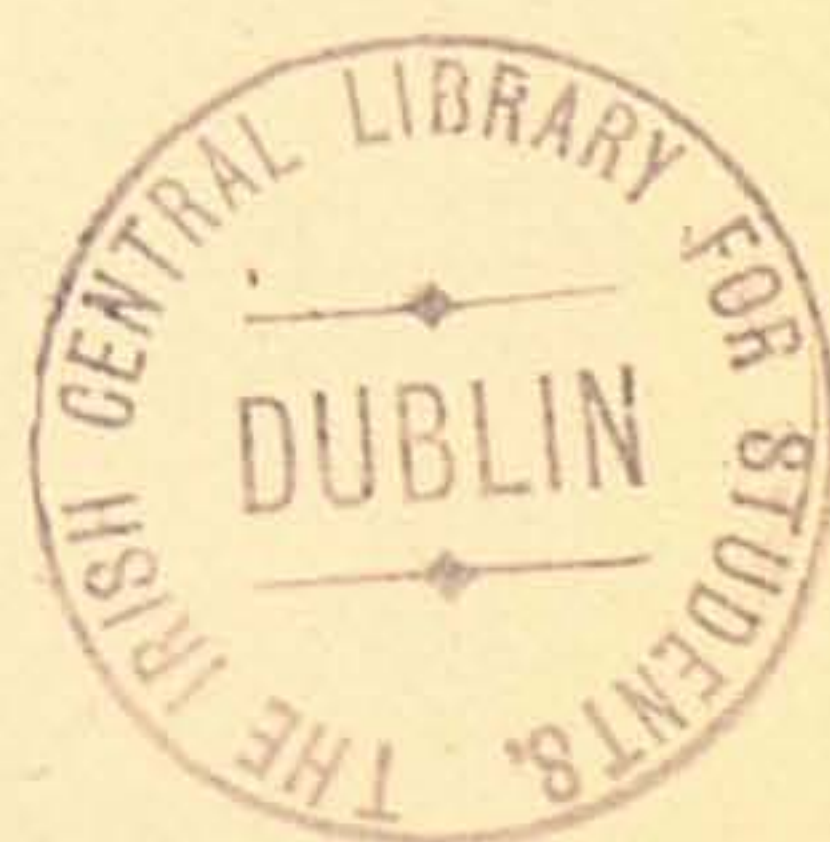
The effigy of an ecclesiastic, carved in oak, and about four feet eight inches in height, at present occupies a position in an angle of the cell. It is not known with certainty that this was its original place. The natives assert that it is a statue of their patron saint, Molaise, and believe it to be the work of the *Goban Saor*, a famous artificer who, there is reason to assume, flourished some time in the sixth century, or thereabouts. On the other hand, it has been described (but by persons who were totally ignorant on any subject of art) as the figure-head of a ship; some asserting it to have belonged to one of the vessels of the Armada, several of which were wrecked on the coast of Sligo.¹ Others conjecture that it probably surmounted the prow of a merchantman cast away in the neighbourhood, and that it came to shore, where it was picked

¹ In sight of Inismurray. The reef on which they struck is still called "Carrigna-Spania," or *The Spaniard's Rock*.

They were probably seeking for shelter in Milk Haven, but failed to make the entrance.—W. M.

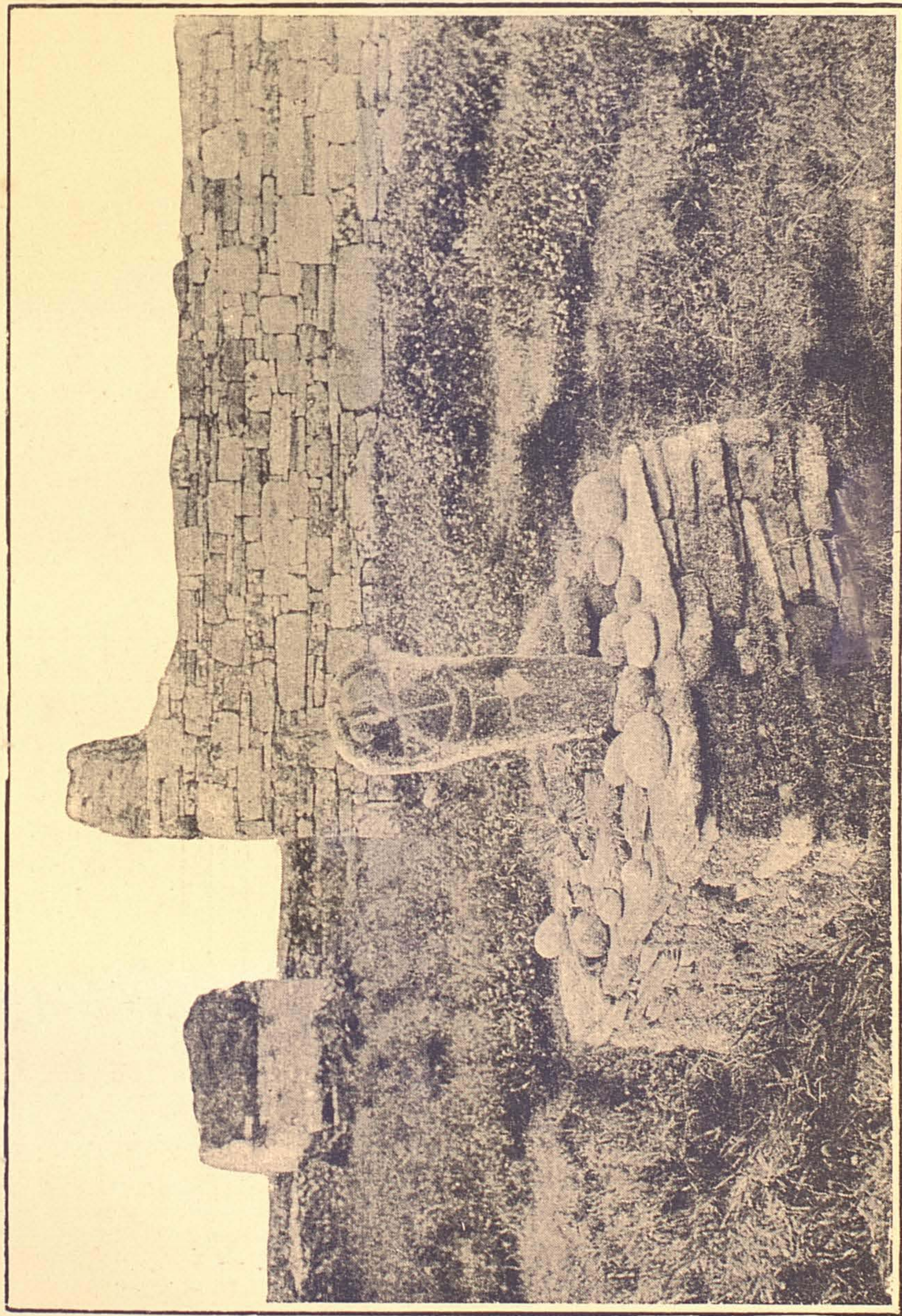


Fig. 21.—Oaken Figure of St. Molaise.





TEAMPULL MOLAISE, CALLED ALSO TEAMPULL-NA-BFEAR, TEAMPULL MOR, OR THE MONASTERY,
As it stood before it came into the hands of the Board of Works restorers.
Reduced from the photographic plate in Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture," published in 1875.



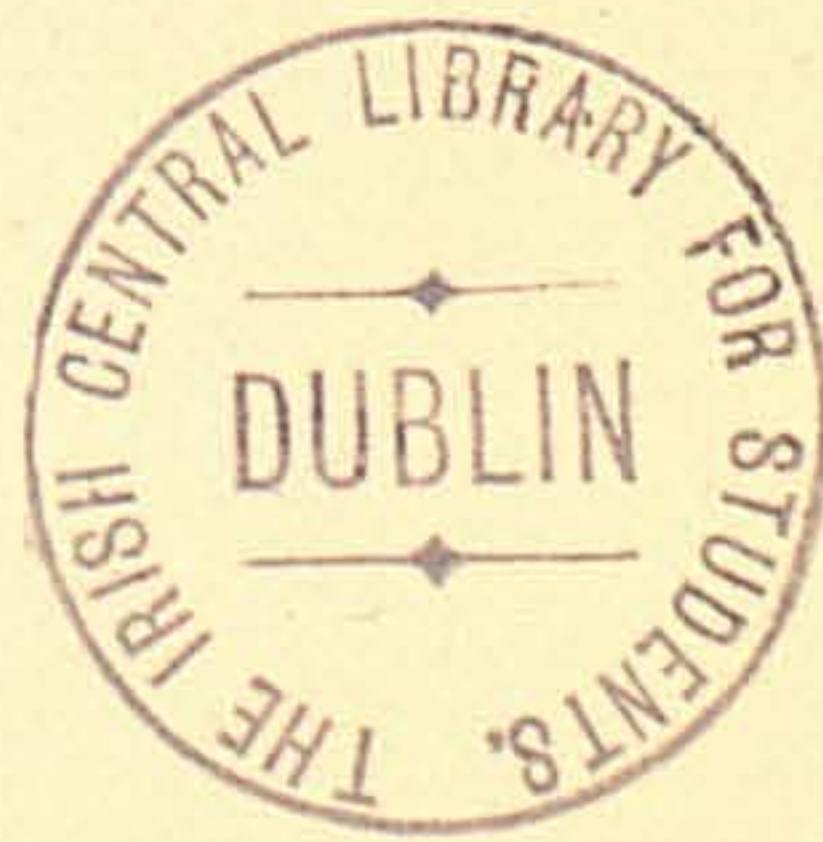
TEACH MOLAISE.

ALTOIR BEG, WITH ALTAR STONES.

TEAMPULL MOLAISE.

Showing side wall of Teampull Molaise, newly built by workmen employed under the Board of Works in 1881.

From a Photograph taken in 1892 by Mr. R. Welch.



up by some of the islanders, who, imagining it to be a figure of their saint, miraculously delivered to them by the sea, placed it over, or beside, the altar of their church!

The truth is, the effigy represents a cleric—no doubt St. Molaise—and that it is a mediæval work, executed, as may be judged from its style, some time about the commencement of the fifteenth century. It may possibly be somewhat older or somewhat later. The figure has been subjected to much ill usage. It is said on one occasion to have been stolen, and carried to sea, thrown overboard, and used as a target for rifle and pistol practice, and then set adrift.¹ Next morning, however, it was discovered in its accustomed place in the church. The figure had probably been found floating by some native fishermen, or had been washed ashore by the tide. Little can now be said of the face or hands, almost every detail having disappeared; but the folds of the dress, though exhibiting a degree of stiffness characteristic of middle-age design, are not destitute of a certain amount of artistic feeling.

Oaken statues of local saints would appear not to have been uncommon even in remote Western churches. One of St. Brendan remains on Clare Island, a second on Inis Gloria. A wooden statue of St. Ibar is recorded to have existed on the once celebrated island of Beg Erin, off the coast of Wexford.

Teampull-na-Bfear.—In this venerable structure we may recognize a church, as distinguished from an oratory. It measures twenty-five feet six inches in length, by twelve feet in width, and, like every Irish temple of its class and period, is in plan a plain oblong quadrangle, with a square-headed doorway in the west gable, and a window to the east. In no striking respect does its architectural style differ from that of the building last described, except that the roof was probably composed of timber, thatch, or scraws—certainly not of stone. The doorway is four feet eleven inches high; one foot nine

¹ This occurrence took place early in the present century.—W. M.

and a-half inches in breadth at top, and one foot eleven inches at bottom. Its component stones are all large, well wrought, and nicely fitted together. The lintel is particularly long and massive. A window very similar to that just described as belonging to *Teach Molaise* is seen in the eastern gable. It has the same kind of "steps," inclined sides, and a large splay. On the interior it measures, to the spring of the arch, two feet eleven inches; breadth at top, two feet eight inches, and at base, two feet nine and a-half inches. Its semi-circular covering is carved out of two separate stones. The side-walls are prolonged one foot beyond the face of the eastern gable, and form pilasters about two feet five inches wide. Such projections are found in not a few of our earlier churches, both on their eastern and western terminations. It seems a strange arrangement that they should appear here on the eastern end only.

There is on Inismurray a legend, that in the erection of this church St. Molaise and the celebrated St. Columba were partners, but that, owing to a difference in their respective dispositions, the one being mild and retiring, the other hot and enterprising, they could not at all times thoroughly agree; and so Columba made up his mind to leave the island. It is a remarkable fact that in the extensive cemetery which surrounds this so-called "Church of the Men," no woman is permitted to be interred. The burial-ground for females is at *Teampull-na-mban*, or the "Women's Church," situated some distance outside the cashel. It is universally believed by the islanders that if a woman be buried in the men's ground the corpse will be removed, during the night, by unseen hands to the woman's cemetery, and *vice versa*.

Could Columba have originated the rule that men only should be buried in the cashel? He seems to be credited with a horror of women. Alluding to the Cemetery of the Nuns at Iona, Pennant writes:—"This nunnery could never have been founded (as some assert) in the days of *St. Columba*, who was no admirer of the fair sex: in fact, he held them in such abhorrence that he

detested all cattle on their account, and would not permit a cow to come within sight of his sacred walls, because,

S'far am bi bo, bi'dh bean, s'far am bi bean, bi'dh mallacha.—

“Where there is a cow there must be a woman; and where there is a woman there must be mischief.”

But the separation of the sexes in death was usual in other Celtic districts. For instance (I once more quote Pennant):—“Descend to the ruins of old Kin-Garth Church” (Isle of Bute); “two cemeteries belong to it, a higher and a lower: the last was allotted for the interment of females alone; because, in old times, certain women being employed to carry a quantity of holy earth brought from Rome, lost some by the way, and so incurred this penalty for their negligence—that of being buried separated from the other sex.”

Teampull-na-Teinidh.—Of the various edifices remaining within the cashel, that mysterious structure called *Teampull-na-Teinidh* or the “Church of the Fire,” is, in its present state, the most modern. It should be observed that this building is sometimes styled *Teach-na-Teinidh* by the islanders. It is oblong in form, measuring, internally, seventeen feet four inches by eleven feet four inches. The walls are two feet thick, and in their construction stones of small size and much lime-mortar appear to have been used. There are two flat-topped entrances, one on either side, placed about midway between the gables. The northern one might possibly have served the purposes of a window. Altogether, the building cannot be considered older than the fourteenth century—it may be even considerably later; but that it stands on the site of an earlier structure is extremely probable. On the soffit of the lintel-stone of its south-eastern doorway (for the *Teampull*, or *Teach*, does not lie, as is usual in the majority of our churches, more or less directly east and west) may be seen carved the greater portion of a very ancient cross. This covering very likely belonged to the doorway of an older edifice. The sacred emblem

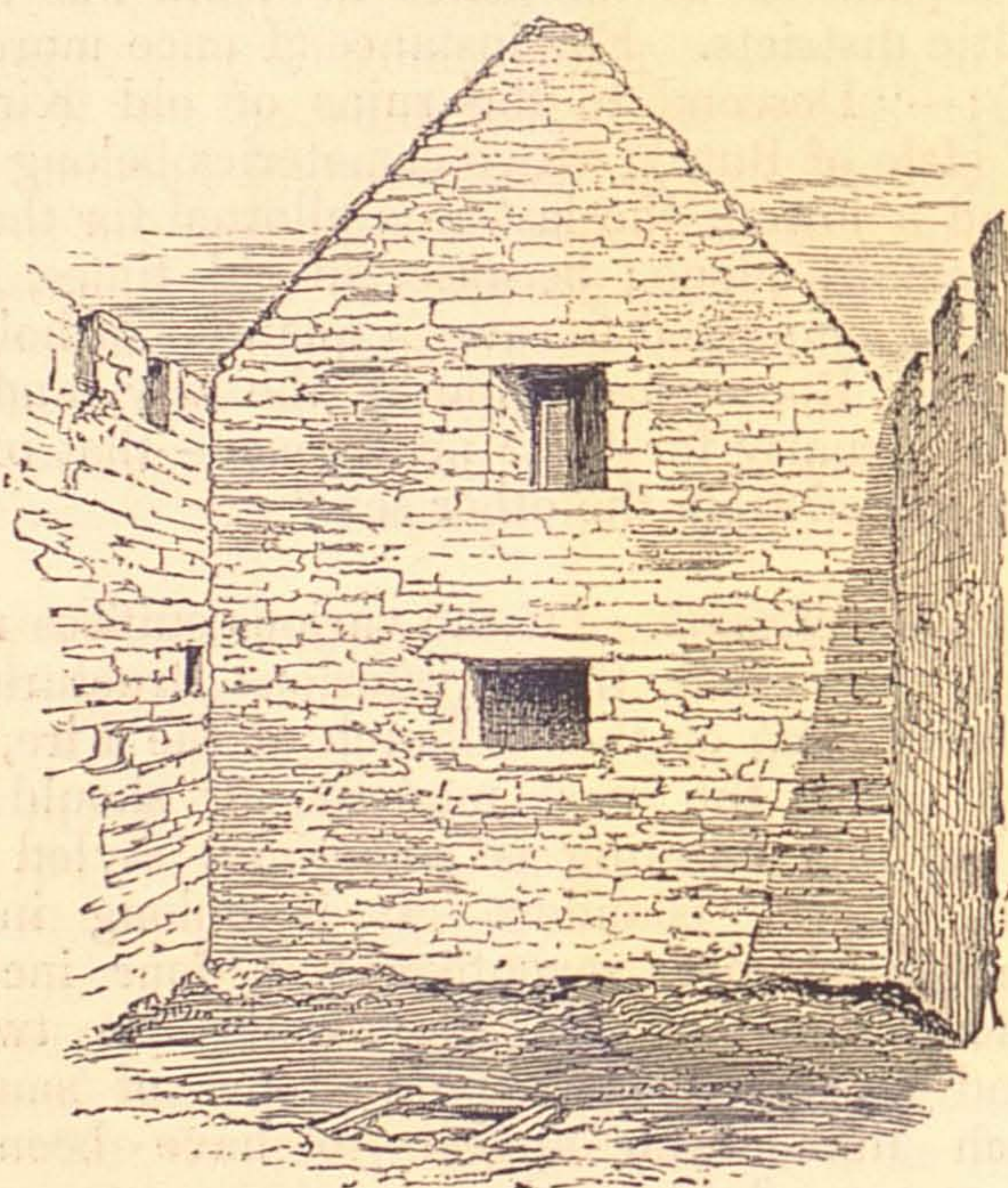


Fig. 22.—Interior of *Teampull-na-Teinidh* (sometimes called *Teach-na-Teinidh*), showing, in foreground, position of Ancient Hearth.

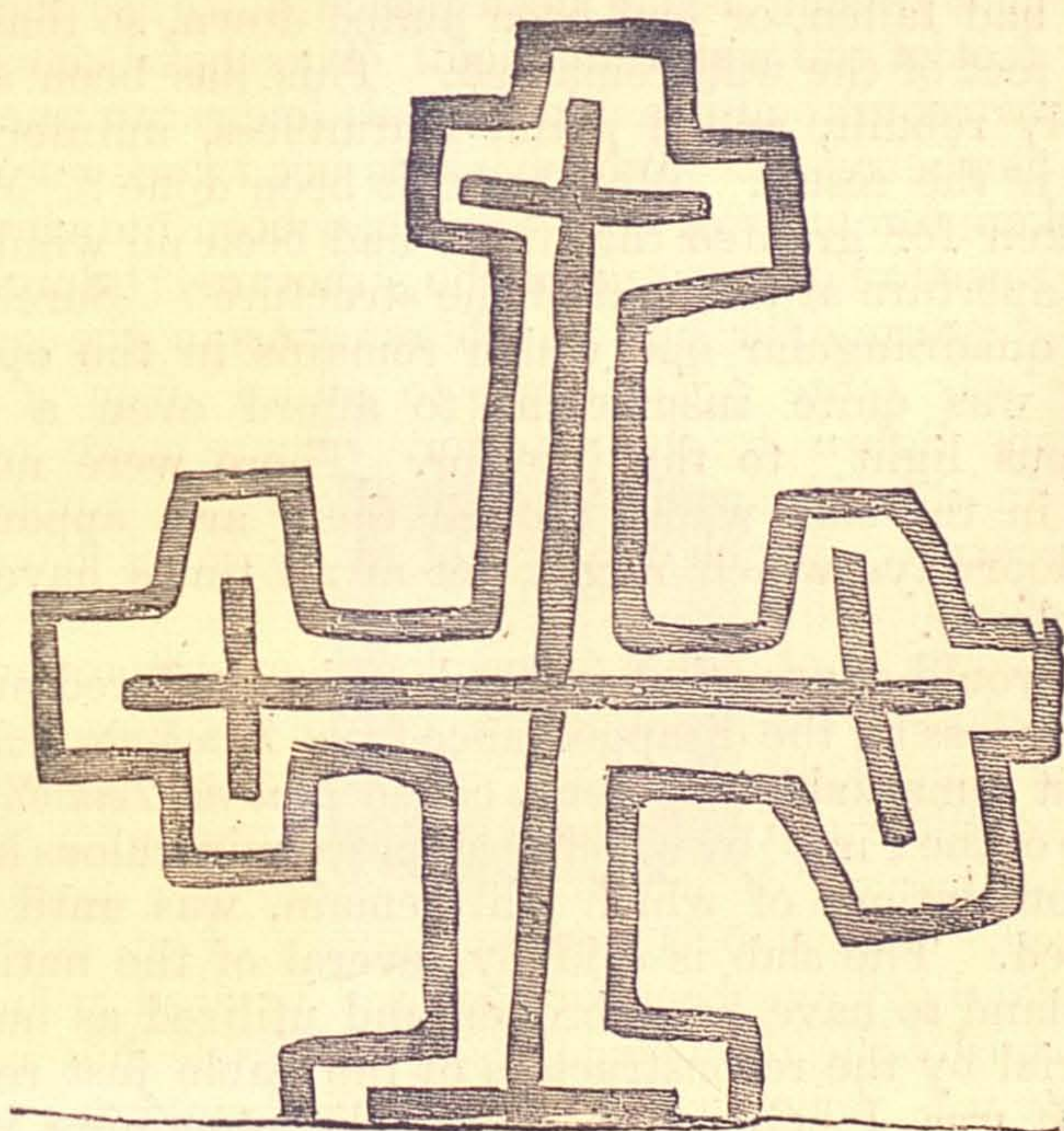


Fig. 23.—Cross inscribed on Lintel of Doorway of *Teampull*, or *Teach-na-Teinidh*.
Length, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; breadth, 12 inches.

appears to have been sometimes engraved on the soffits of early square-headed doorways, as at Killiney, county Dublin, and in Our Lady's Church, Glendalough, county Wicklow. Up to the time when the Board of Works officials commenced operations upon the cashel buildings, *Teach-na-Teinidh* remained in a tolerable state of preservation. The greater portion, indeed, of the south-western gable had fallen, or had been pulled down, so that only a few feet of the wall remained. This has been almost entirely rebuilt, and a plain, featureless, uninteresting work is the result. Why has this been done? Must it be taken for granted that there had been no window or other aperture at this end of the structure? Surely, the little quadrangular ope which remains in the opposite gable was quite insufficient to afford even a "dim religious light" to the interior. There were no windows in the side walls, though there are, apparently, two doorways which might not at all times have been kept closed.

It would appear that archæology has suffered an irreparable loss by the disappearance from *Teach-na-Teinidh* of a most remarkable flagstone, called *Leac-na-Teinidh*, "the Stone of the Fire," by which a supposed miraculous hearth, the foundations of which still remain, was until lately covered. The slab is said by several of the natives of the island to have been broken and utilized as building material by the reconstructors of the gable just referred to. It was, I believe, the only relic remaining in Ireland which appeared to be connected in some way, perhaps long forgotten, with the mysterious fire-worship practised by our Aryan forefathers. With the Holed Stones, the Sacred Wells, the Turning or Swearing Stones, presently to be noticed, it formed an important feature in a group of monuments not elsewhere found associated within extremely limited bounds—a group, indeed, the due consideration of which directs our attention to the far East, where, while the world was some thousands of years younger, not a few of the quaintest myths and observances which are generally considered characteristic of the Celtic mind had their origin. What remains of the Hearth, or Fireplace, is of a quadrangular form, measuring three feet

three inches on each side. It consists (see plan, fig. 24) of seven stones, four of which are placed on edge, and set deeply in the ground, in the manner of a pagan cist. The sides face, as nearly as possible, the cardinal points, and are therefore in position not coincident with the surrounding walls of the *Teach*. The spot has its legend, or legends, two of which are of a very remarkable character. The natives all aver that here, of old, burned a perpetual fire, from whence all the hearths on the island, which from any cause had become extinguished, were rekindled. Some say that it was only necessary to place a sod of turf upon the now missing *Leac*, when miraculous combustion immediately ensued. Others declare that the sought-for fire was given out in the shape of a small burning "coal";

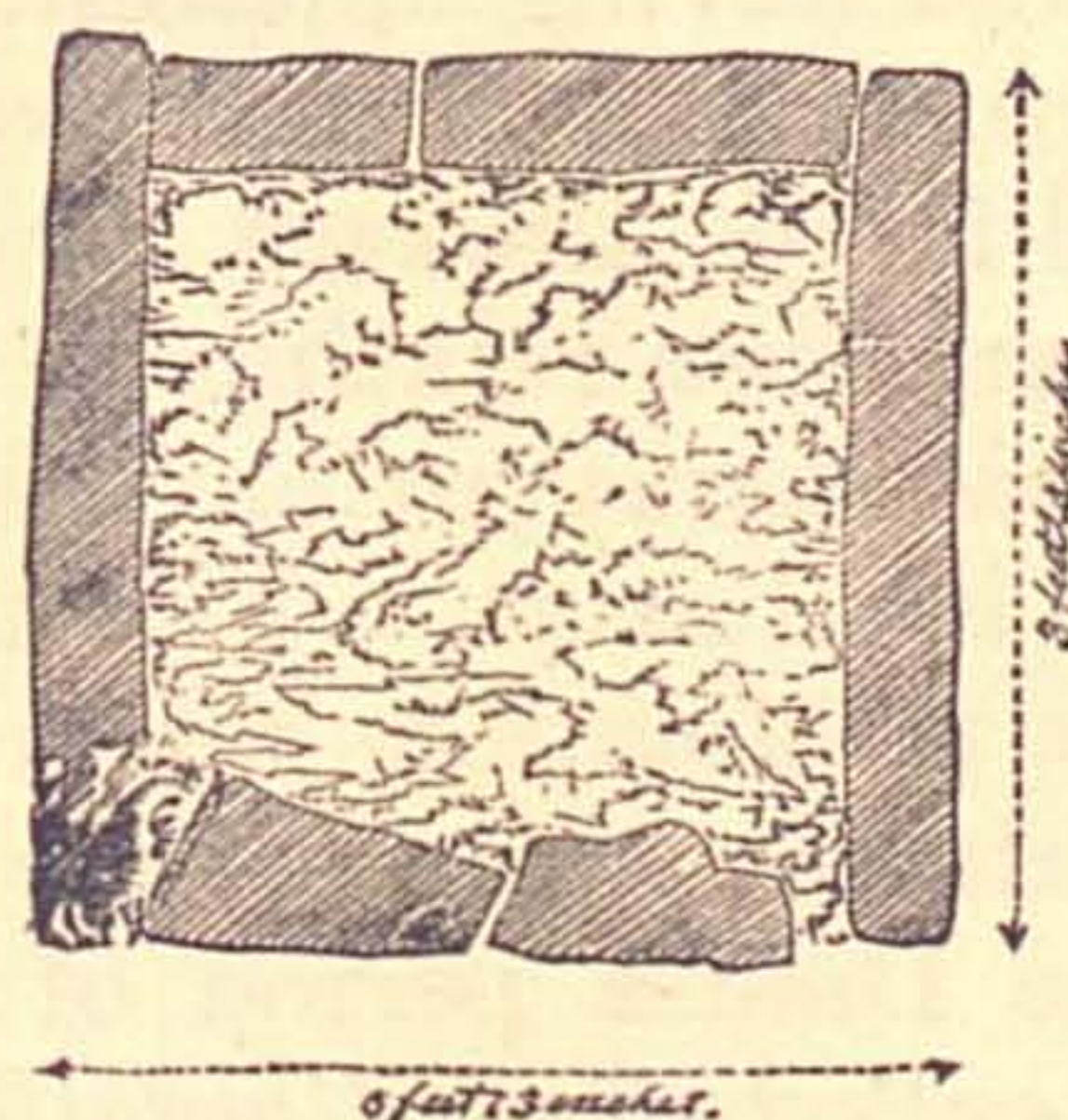


Fig. 24.—*Leac-na-Teinidh*, or "The Stone of the Fire."

but all agree that from *Leac-na-Teinidh*, and from it alone, all the island fires were kindled, or relit. A time, however, arrived, how long ago it is impossible to determine, when the famous hearth was to be ignominiously quenched for ever. The story of its extinction, universally told, and believed in by the islanders, is as follows:—"In the old time a stranger, said to have been a Scot, who had casually landed upon Inismurray, on hearing of the wonderful hearth, at once proceeded to the *Teach*, where he found the fire, as usual, smouldering." It is not necessary here to detail exactly the further action of the visitor. Suffice it to say that, probably out of idle bravado, he shamefully desecrated the *Leac*, "and lo! a miracle was

the immediate result. The fire which up to that fatal moment had been scarcely visible at once flared up, and swiftly assumed the strength and appearance of a burning fiery furnace, its flames lapping and enveloping the wretched victim, so that he could neither struggle against them nor fly, and stood melting, as it were, into nothingness, so that after a moment little remained but fragmentary bones, cracked and distorted," like those which are sometimes found in pagan cairns or barrows where cremation had been practised.

It is a curious fact in connexion with this weird legend, that within a niche, measuring one foot ten inches by one foot five inches, and about one foot in depth, situate in what may be called the eastern gable, a number of bones, evidently human, and having apparently been under the action of intense fire, are to this day pointed to as having belonged to the ill-fated *Albanach*, or Scot, and in confirmation of the narrative relating to what is supposed by the people of Inismurray to have been a miraculous intervention of the local saint. The tradition points to no date, and the immolation referred to may have occurred many centuries ago. There existed of old in Ireland, during the Danish period of rapine, a class of people who were called *Gall Gaedhill*. They had renounced their baptism, and had assumed the customs of the Northmen, and had been fostered by them; but some of them did penance, and came to make satisfaction. (See "Fragments of Annals": the *Journal R.H.A.A.I.*, vol. iv., p. 367.) Such renegade natives of Erin would, down at least to the beginning of the twelfth century, be described as Scots by any of their countrymen who might have had the misfortune to come in contact with them.

CHURCH OUTSIDE THE CASHEL.

Teampull-na-mban, the "Woman's Church," sometimes called by the islanders *Teampull Muire*, or the "Church of Mary," stands at a little distance to the north-west of the cashel. It measures twenty-eight

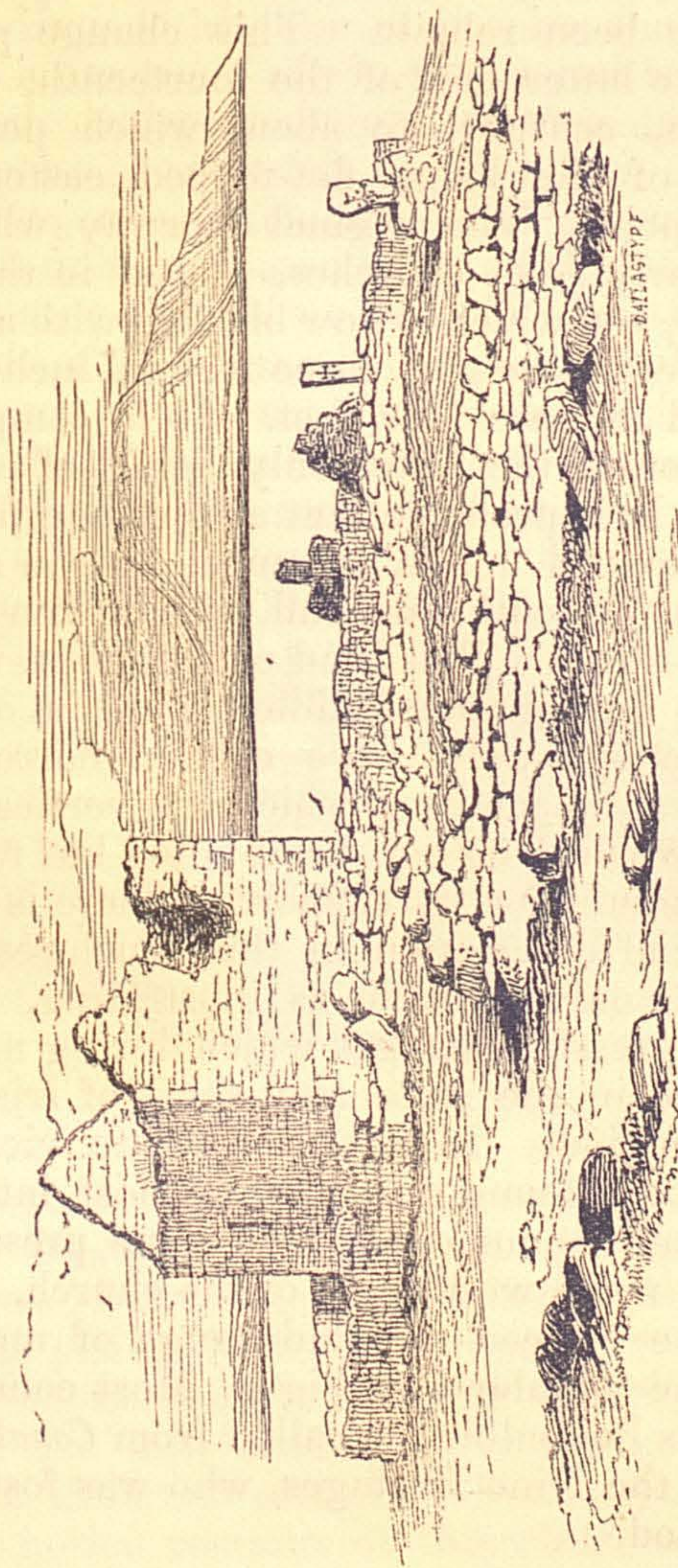


Fig. 25.—*Teampull-na-mban*, or “Church of the Women,” sometimes called *Teampull Muire*, or “Church of Mary.”

feet in length by thirteen in breadth. The walls are of unusual height in an Irish *cill* of its size. A portion of the remaining masonry must be referred to a very early age; but nearly the whole of the upper walls appear to have been rebuilt. This change probably took place in the latter part of the fourteenth, or early in the fifteenth, century, to about which period the characteristics of the long, flat-topped eastern light would seem to point. The original doorway, which was, as is usual in early Irish churches, placed in the centre of the west end, and which is now blocked with masonry, measures four feet in height, three feet six inches broad at the top, and at base four feet. It is composed of rather small stones, the lintel only being of any considerable size. It is probable that at the time this early doorway was stopped up, an entrance, now in a ruined state, situate in the south side-wall, was broken through and used in its stead. This kind of alteration was continually made, during the Middle Ages, in old Irish churches. The side-walls have each a narrow, flat-headed window, the jambs of which are vertical. The southern wall would long ago have fallen but for a buttress which was built for its support. There is nothing worthy of special description in this much remodelled church, which is only valuable as illustrating, in some degree, the progressive changes which during mediæval days took place in the style and spirit of Irish architectural construction. In the immediate vicinity of *Teampull Muire* are found a number of most interesting *leachta* and other monuments. The view presented is taken from the north-west angle of the church. In the distance will be noticed a grand range of mountains belonging to the mainland of Sligo. Most conspicuous amongst them is Benbulbin, so called from *Conal Gulban*, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, who was fostered in its neighbourhood.

THE ALTARS WITHIN THE CASHEL.—“CURSING STONES,”
ETC.

Standing within the cashel are three quadrangular structures composed of rough uncemented masonry, and apparently, except that they are of smaller size, and more carefully built, differing in little from the monumental piles, or *leachta*, which are found at certain “stations,” distributed along the seaboard of the island. They are styled altars, and are visited by stranger devotees on occasions of pilgrimage to Inismurray, and by the natives, from time to time. The largest and most important of the three is called *Clocha-breaca* (“the speckled stones”), from the number of curiously-wrought, time

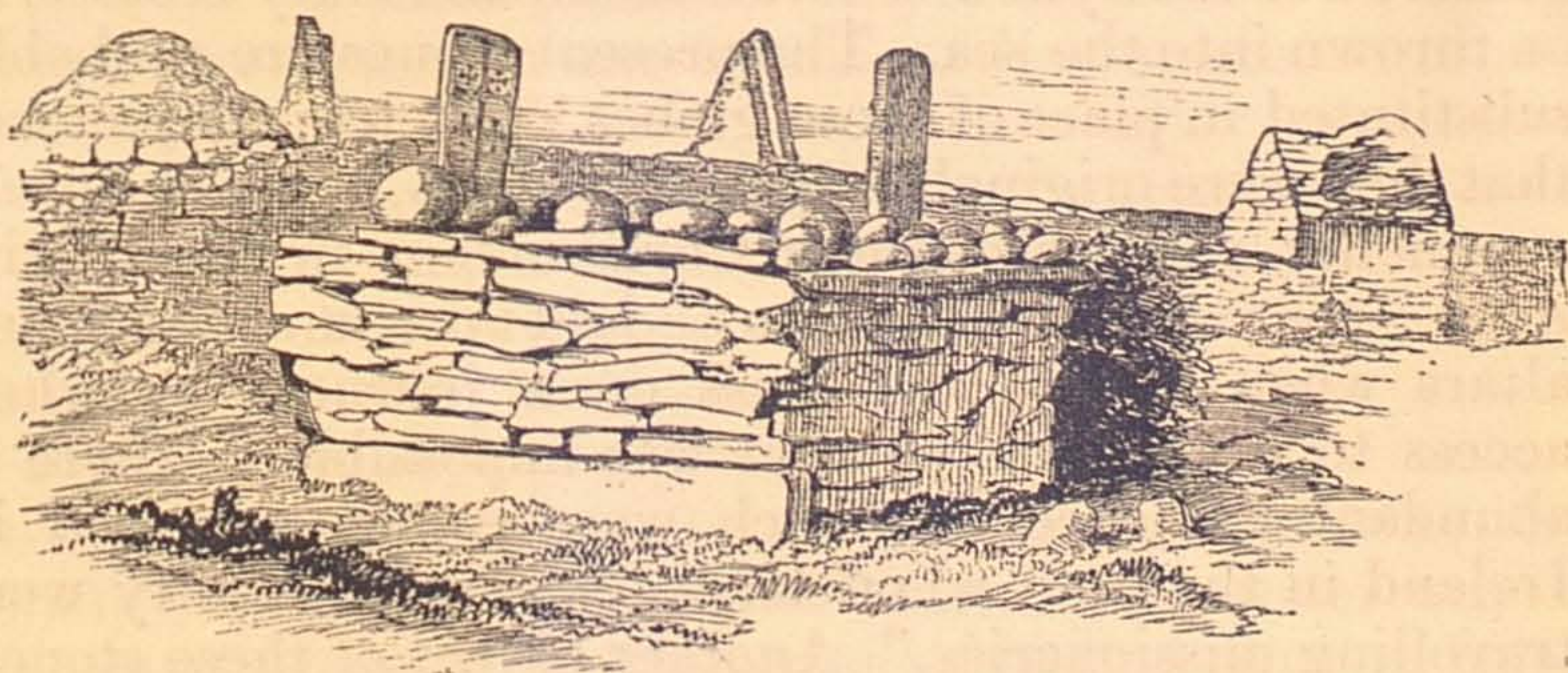


Fig. 26.—*Clocha-breaca* Altar, 7 feet square, by about 3 feet in height.

and weather-tinted lithic relics of a long, long past, and of most mysterious character with which its surface is overspread. So numerous, indeed, are these remains, that it is generally believed upon the island that they cannot be counted, each and every person who has essayed the task rendering, as far as can be remembered, a different account. Petrie was, I believe, the first to notice remains of this class; and his opinions concerning them have been summed up by Dr. Stokes, (see *Life of Petrie*, p. 295), as follows:—“Stones of this class are believed, to the present day, to be possessed of miraculous properties for healing sicknesses, and are used for swearing on, and also as maledictory stones.

Two of them, both of which bear inscriptions as well as crosses, are to be seen in the Paris Museum. They are common in the western Isles of Scotland." When describing the Cathedral of Iona, Pennant writes, p. 287:—"A little north-west of the door is the pedestal of a cross. On it are certain stones that seem to have been the supports of a tomb. Numbers who visit this island (I suppose the *Elect*, impatient for the consummation of all things) think it incumbent on them to turn each of these thrice round, according to the course of the sun. They are called Clacha-bràth; for it is thought the bràth, or end of the world, will not arrive till the stone on which they stand is worn through. 'Originally,' writes Sachelverel, 'there were three noble globes of white marble placed on three stone basins, and these were turned round; but the Synod ordered them, and sixty crosses, to be thrown into the sea. The present stones are probably substituted in place of these globes.'" Petrie conjectures that they were originally "portable altars, or *super altaria*, commonly used throughout Christendom in the Middle Ages—consecrated stones, to be laid upon unconsecrated altars when celebrating mass on a journey, or when access to a consecrated altar was impossible. There is abundant evidence that such were commonly used in Ireland in the time when teachers of Christianity were travelling missionaries." Another object of these stones, Petrie suggests, was "that they might serve as memorials left by those early teachers to aid in preserving the memory of their labours, and keeping alive devout feelings among the people." This seems borne out by a passage in the Book of Lecan, which states that Aire, son of Forba, who died A.D. 737, had a son Erna, or Hierne, 'who left no heirs but mass stones.'" After giving many legends which seem to support this theory, Petrie also conjectures, but with less confidence, that these stones may have been borne by pilgrims from the Holy Land, or else brought into the country by foreign monks, who came in such crowds to Ireland in the fifth century. He adds that he would not have hinted at this theory but for an interesting legend, related to him by O'Curry, of a black stone which fell from heaven, on the altar before

St. Declan, when he was returning from Rome. "And he had great courage against the Gentiles through the power of this stone, and he had it carried home."

Whether Petrie was right in any of his theories regarding the character of these stones is a question which, no doubt, invites a considerable amount of discussion. We know that a remarkable system of anathematizing their real or supposed enemies, at least occasionally, prevailed amongst the people of Ireland at a period antecedent to their conversion to Christianity. Part of the proceedings consisted in the turning of certain stones. Cursing in this manner bears with it a strong aroma of Paganism. Many of my readers will, no doubt, recollect some apposite lines in one of Sir Samuel Ferguson's truly national poems. The incident related to a story of ante-Christian days, the Burial of King Cormac, recorded in one of our earliest manuscripts:—

" They loosed their curse against the king,
They cursed him in his flesh and bones;
And daily in their mystic ring
They turn'd the maledictive stones."

Now, seeing the antiquity of a practice of cursing, in which it would appear that the turning of stones was a necessary formula, it is interesting to find that on Inismurray a similar procedure, though now of rather rare occurrence, is still observed, or has been so, within the memory of persons still young.

During ordinary pilgrimages on the "Way to the Cross," the usual route is round the altar from left to right, in *the course of the sun*. When vengeance is desired, an opposite course is adopted, the stones are thrice turned, the curse being "loosed" at each revolution, and the ceremony ends. Woe to him, however, who anathematizes his neighbour wrongly! as the curse can have no effect on the innocent, and is sure to recoil, exactly as uttered, on the head of the issuer.

This ceremonial, turning from left to right, was called *Desiul* by the Irish, and also by the Highlanders of Scotland. It is not necessary here to do more than

refer to the erudite communication laid before the Royal Irish Academy (see *Proceedings*, second ser., vol. i., Pol. Lit. and Antiq.), by Sir Samuel Ferguson, on the subject of this striking and old-world prevailing observance. Sir Walter Scott has referred to the feeling prevalent amongst the mountaineers of his country, which prompts them to pass round an individual whom they wish to honour in the course of the sun. On the other hand, to go to the left is tantamount to a malediction, and is called by the singular name of "*withershins*." The following verse from an old Scotch ballad was written out, from memory, by Lady Rachel Butler, and kindly laid before the Rev. James Graves, who was good enough to draw my attention to it. It seems that the withershins, or *widdershins* as the word appears in the manuscript, was considered as unfortunate on sea as it was on land:—

" My love he built anither ship
 An' set her on the main,
 He had but twenty mariners
 To bring her back again ;
 The stormy wind did loudly blaw,
 The raging waves did flout,
 An' my love an' his bonnie ship
 Turned widdershins about."

From left to right has ever been, as far as memory goes, the processional order of our funeral rounds and stations. It was thus the piper marched at a feast, and it was from left to right the flowing measures of wine or of other liquors were filled in days of old Irish hospitality. It was the lucky turn, while that to the left was the reverse. Even children, for good fortune's sake, in some parts of Ireland were occasionally christened by the singular name of "*North-east*"! The reverence for the "*Desiul*" is evidently of extreme antiquity, and of Oriental origin.

Only five of the many altar-stones (sometimes styled "*Cursing*" or "*Swearing Stones*") remaining on *Clocha-breaca* are decorated. In all cases the figure presented is that of a Greek cross, enclosed by a circle. Two of the examples which I shall first describe are highly ornate, so much so, indeed, that their design might form a valuable

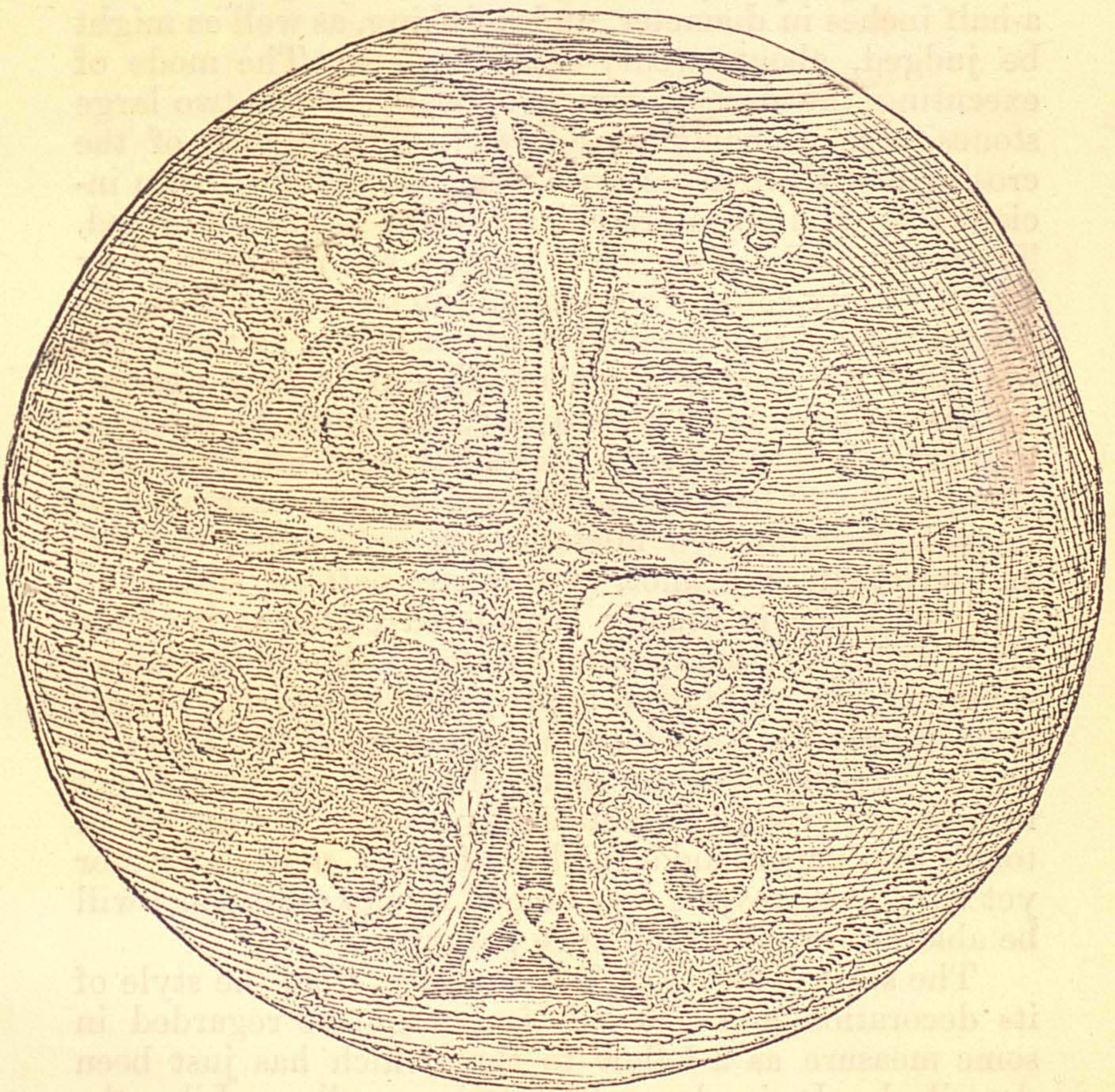


Fig. 27.—Altar-stone on *Clocha-breaca*. No. 1. Diameter, $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

study to an illuminating artist intent on reproducing early Irish work of sacred, or simply decorative, character. It is perfectly evident that the stone here figured could never have been used as a portable altar. In form it is like a slightly depressed globe, measuring fifteen and a-half inches in diameter, and weighing, as well as might be judged, about twenty-eight pounds. The mode of executing the design, which appears on the two large stones, was probably as follows:—The figures of the crosses and their accessories were marked out by an incised line, and all intermediate spaces slightly lowered. Thus, the limbs of the cross proper are represented by panels faintly sunk, while at the intersection and in the arms were left, in low relief, bands or fillets. In the larger example, the central circular fillet, if it ever existed, appears to have been worn away; but from the intersection extends through each limb a flat band, which divides about midway between the centre and the extremity of the arm, forming two fillets, which separate gradually, and terminate in a knot, or triquetra pattern, such as in early Irish art is usually considered emblematic of the Holy Trinity. Each quadrant in the design of the larger stone exhibits a beautiful triple group of spirals. These may likewise be considered as emblems of the Three in One. Except in certain lights, the work on these stones is difficult to trace; but, strangely enough, by the aid of tough thin paper, and a handful of grass, not too dry nor yet too juicy, anyone accustomed to make rubbings will be able to bring up the entire pattern.

The stone which I shall now notice, from the style of its decoration and unusual size, might be regarded in some measure as a fellow to that which has just been described. It is, however, rather smaller. Like the other, it is almost globular in form, the engraved portion, and the base, if I may so style the opposite side, being somewhat, but very slightly, flattened. Its weight is very considerable, and from convexity of form the stone was wholly unsuited for the purposes of an altar. But Petrie was possibly correct in supposing that stones of this kind may have been left in commemoration of a visit paid to the shrine (in connexion with which they are



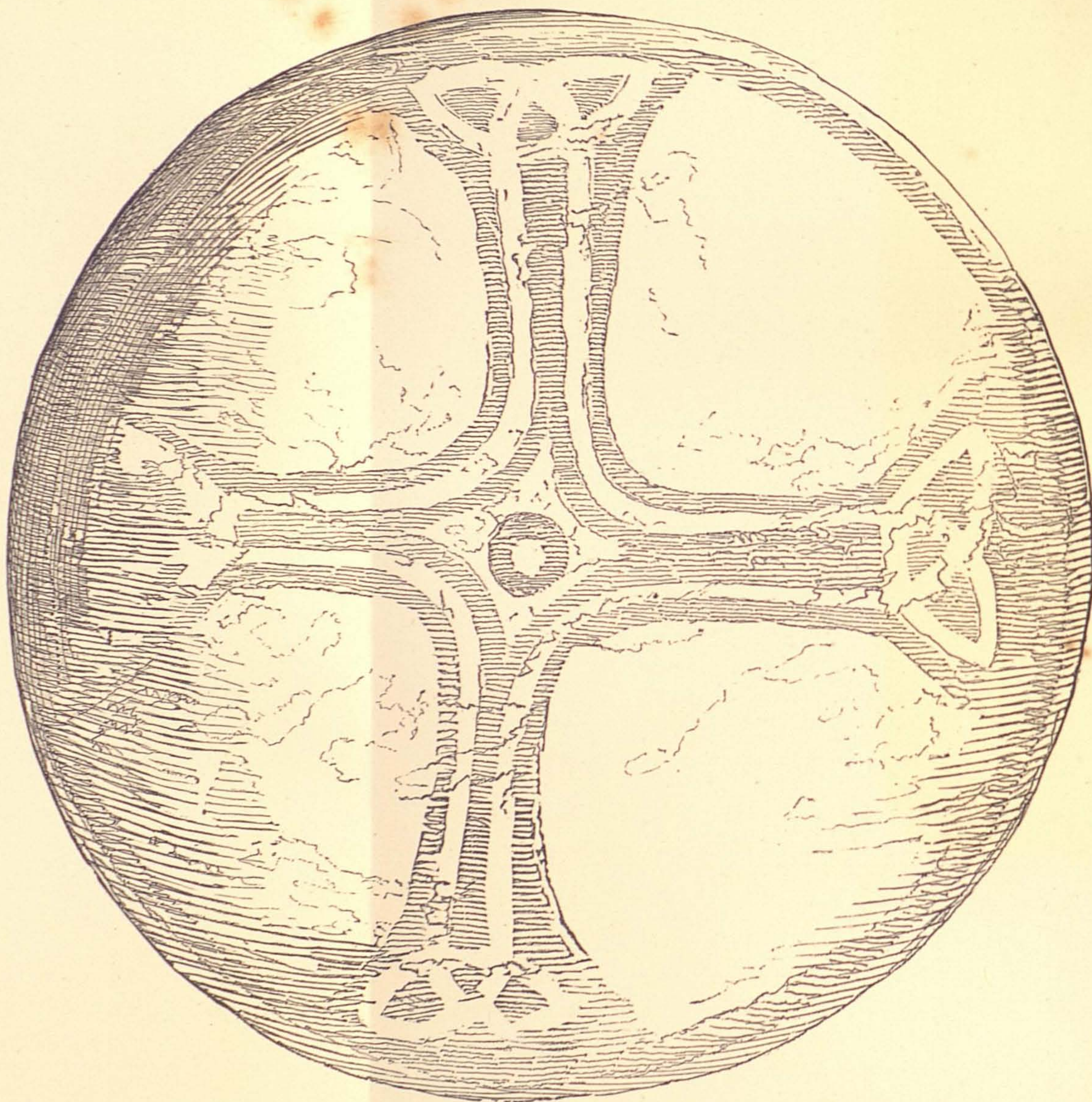


Fig. 28.—Altar-stone on *Cloca-breaca*. No. 2. Diameter, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

found) by some distinguished visitor. In such a case examples like the two under observation must have been selected, and engraved on or near the spot where they are now found. It will be observed that in this instance the members of the cross extend from a small circle at the intersection, and that the quadrants are unoccupied by any figure. The triquetra here produced is a feature in the production of which the old artists in stone of Inismurray seem to have delighted; but with their treatment it is never monotonous, and seems always in its proper place.

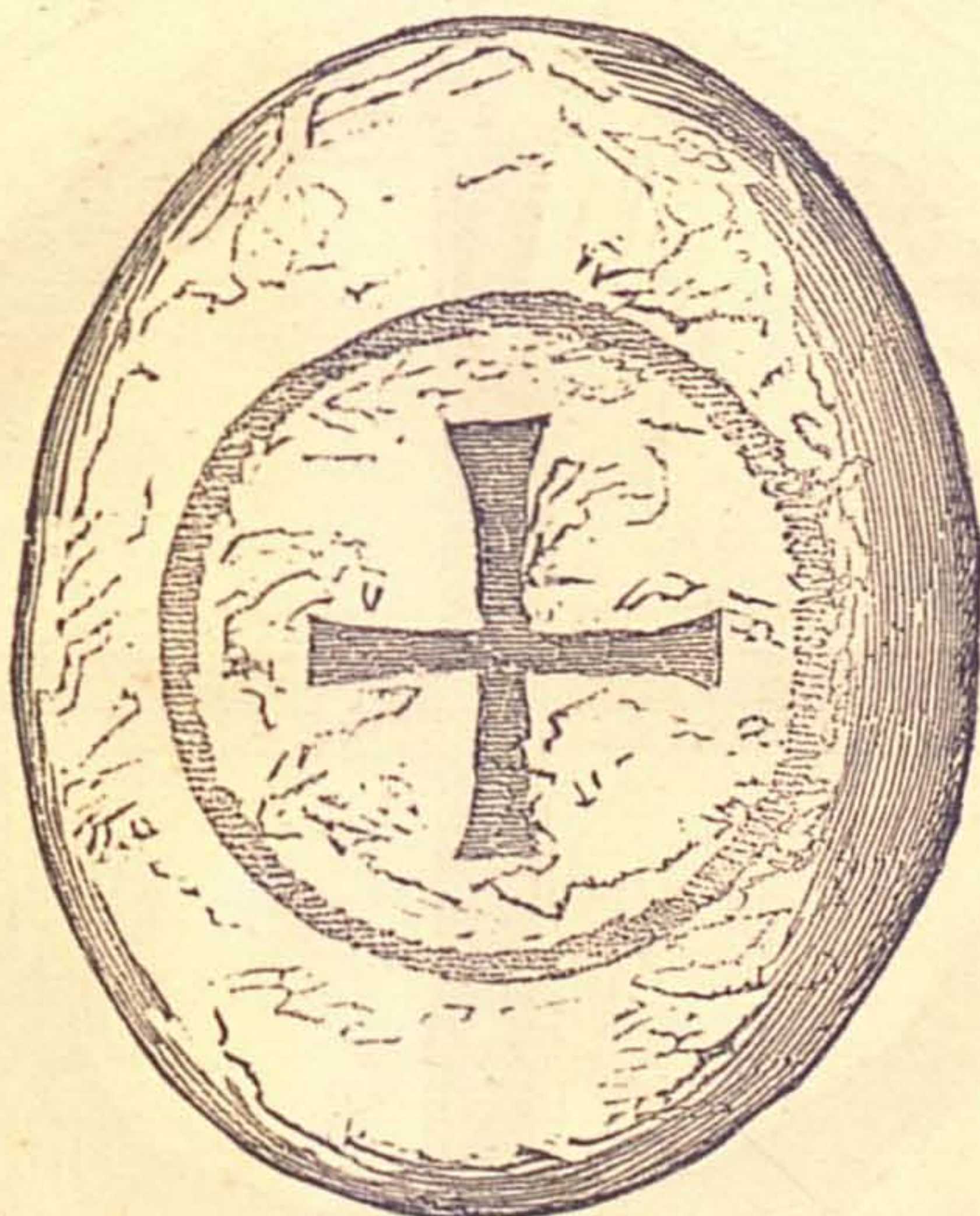


Fig. 29.—Altar Stone on *Cloca-breaca*. No. 3. Greater Diameter, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

A third example of the *Cloca-breaca* punched or engraved stones is here represented. It is considerably smaller than its more highly-wrought companions, and like them, from weight and form, could not possibly have been used as a portable altar. It is fashioned somewhat in the shape of an egg, and measures ten and a-half inches in its greater diameter. Upon what may be considered its upper surface a plain Greek cross, surrounded with a circle, has been engraved or punched. The members of the figure, from their point of intersection, gradually expand in a slight curve, and terminate in horizontal or

straight-lined edges, between which and the circle are unoccupied spaces. The design on the stone, taken as a whole, has a very primitive look. The absence of pellets or rings in the quadrants, and of the triquetra figure in the body of the cross, would lead one to suppose that in this example, and in another presently to be noticed, we may recognize the oldest figured representation of so-called "altar-stones" to be found on Inismurray, or indeed elsewhere in Ireland.

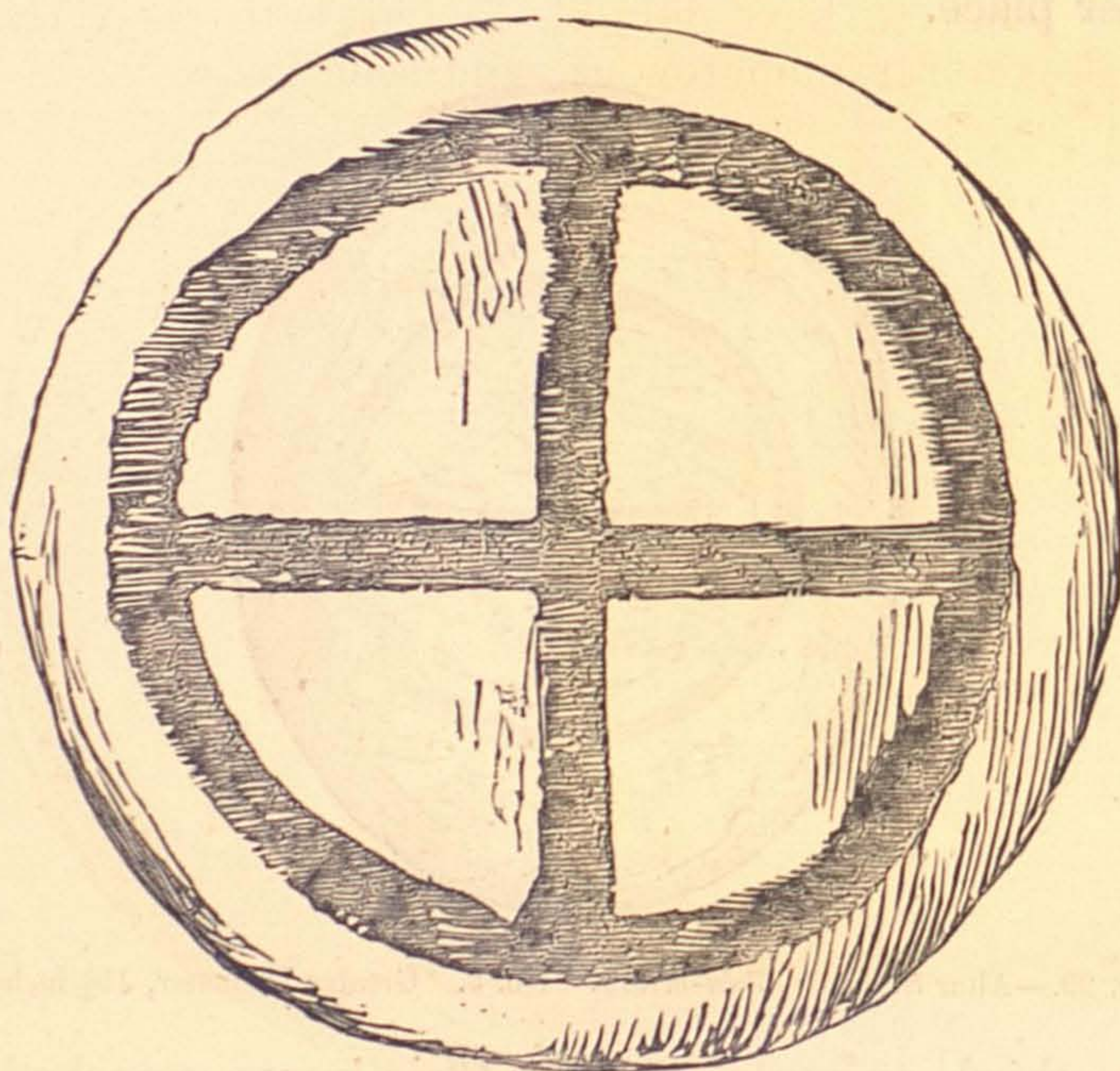


Fig. 30.—Altar Stone on *Cloca-breaca*. No. 4; Diameter of Circle, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The stone to which the annexed engraving refers is rather ruder in character than the three which have just been described. The carving upon it is of the simplest kind—a circle divided into quadrants by a perpendicular and a horizontal line. The design is exactly like that of the "St. Patrick's Cross" usually worn by girls and children in Ireland on the festival day of our National Saint. It is undoubtedly the

oldest form of cross known to this country, and, strange to say, by what appears accidental coincidence, a figure, in some respects not unlike it, is occasionally found on the bases of burial urns discovered in pre-historic cists in Ireland, or, as at Dowth, upon stones of sepulchral tumuli. This form of cross, as a Christian symbol, was in all likelihood brought into Ireland from the East by foreign ecclesiastics, who as missionaries flocked to our shores during the sixth century. Its in-

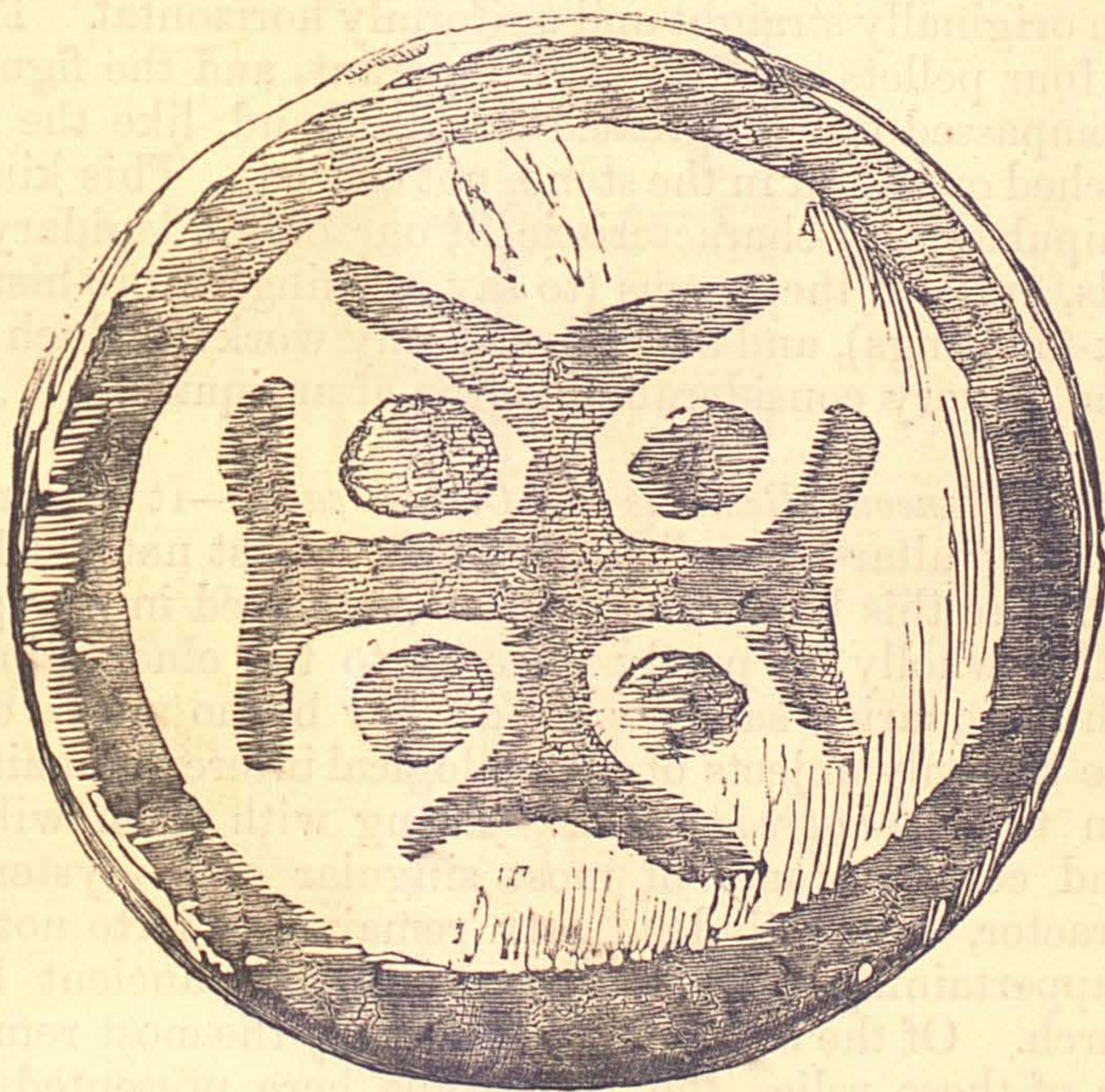


Fig. 31.—Altar Stone on *Cloca-breaca*. No. 5. Diameter of Circle, about 5 inches.

troductio to Erin may, indeed, have taken place at a period somewhat earlier, as there is every reason to believe that the Faith had penetrated to certain districts of this country at a time considerably anterior to the first advent of St. Patrick.

It will be noticed, on reference to the accompanying etchings of the fifth, and last, of the *Cloca-breaca* "altar-stones" remaining to be described, that it differs consi-

derably in character from the others. It is, as is usual in objects of its class, of a rather flattened globular form. The cross, with which it is engraved, or rather punched, partakes mainly of the Greek form; but there are peculiarities observable in the design, some of which are worthy of note. The three upper members terminate in widely splaying bifurcations, such as, in Irish crosses, are only found in examples of extremely early date, while the shaft rises, from a line, now somewhat weather-worn and abraded, but which appears to have been originally straight and uniformly horizontal. There are four pellets, one in each quadrant, and the figure is encompassed by a depressed circular band, like the rest, punched or picked in the stone, not carved. This kind of manipulation is characteristic of our oldest lapidary records, even of the ogams (to say nothing of pre-historic rock-markings), and bespeaks, in any work in which it is found, a very considerable degree of antiquity.

Miscellaneous Remains on Cloca-breaca.—It is curious that the “altar-stones” of Inismurray just noticed have not before this been described or illustrated in any publication wholly or partly devoted to the elucidation of Irish antiquarian subjects. But they by no means comprise the only objects of archæological interest remaining upon the *Cloca-breaca* altar. Along with them will be found certain stones of most singular and mysterious character, unlike, indeed, any remains hitherto noticed as appertaining to rites or usages of the ancient Irish Church. Of the largest, and every way the most remarkable of these relics, the Dallastype here presented will afford a very correct idea. It consists of a block of sandstone—the prevailing stone of the island—measuring about two feet in extreme length; the upper portion is somewhat cube-shaped; the lower consists of a sort of stem, or shaft, gradually narrowing as it descends, and evidently intended for insertion in a base of some kind. The latter, if it consisted of a single stone, unfortunately cannot now be found; but it is not unlikely that the shaft may originally have been socketed in the masonry of the altar. A small hollow, circular in plan, descends

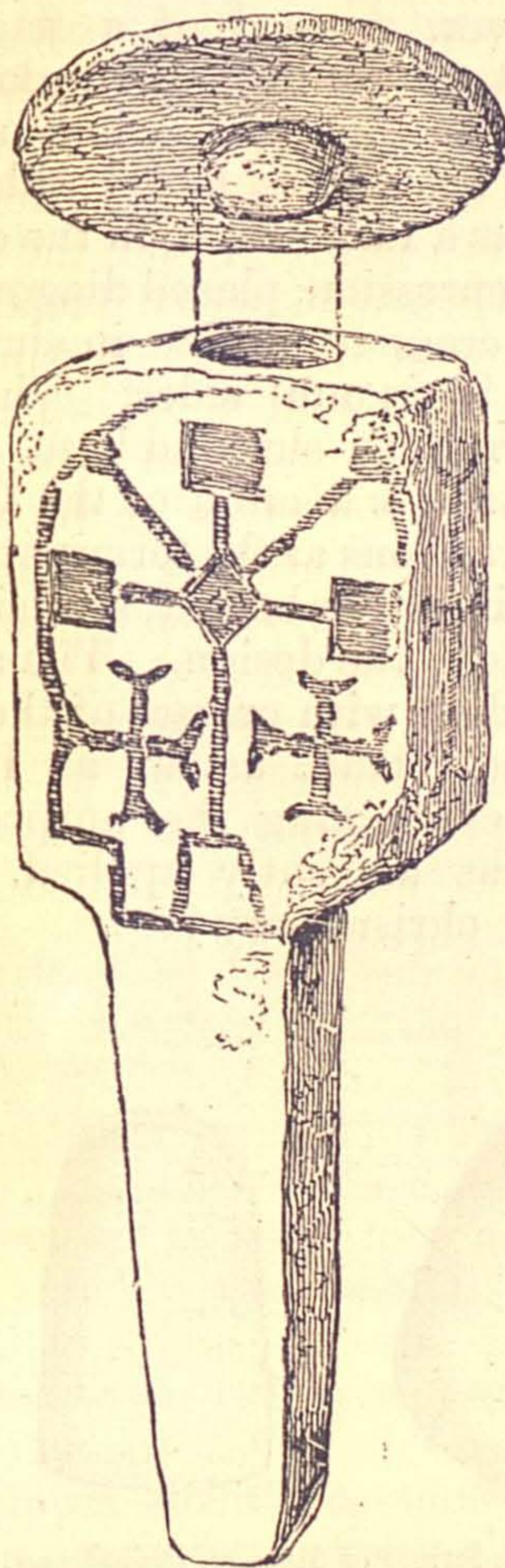


Fig. 32.—Hollowed Stone, with Cover, on *Cloca-breaca* ; use unknown.

vertically into the body of the stone, to a distance which, owing to the presence of decayed matter, probably vegetable, within it, I could not ascertain with accuracy. A cover, formed of a flag, and having a stopper, like what we see in modern glass ware, of a size exactly fitting the neck of the boring, usually surmounts the stone, but is sometimes laid beside it (see fig. 32). The front presents a Latin cross, in the centre of which is a quadrangular depression, placed diagonally. The arms and head of the cross terminate in similar depressions, with vertical or horizontal sides. The shaft is represented as rising from an elevated base. Within each of the lower quadrants is a cross of the Greek kind, with well-marked bifurcations at the termination of their members. A kind of irregular border, semicircular at the top, enclosed the whole of the design. The sides and back of the stone are marked with crosses of the same character. Tradition, on the island, as far as I am aware, has nothing to say concerning the purpose to which this unique object was anciently applied. Could it have been a primitive chrismatory?



Fig. 33.—Objects formed of Stone on *Cloca-breaca*. Use unknown.

A second stone, drilled apparently for the reception of a small quantity of some precious fluid, and furnished with a stopper of stone, is found on *Cloca-breaca*. Its shape may be compared to that of an acorn flattened at the base. There is no name amongst the islanders for it, and tradition is silent as to its former use. It measures three feet ten inches in circumference—see left-

hand figure in sketch (page 70), which also represents two other stones, of undefined character, remaining upon the altar. The larger is eight, the other six inches in height. But that their bases exhibit no sign of abrasion, one might regard them as pestles, or pounders; and yet it may be asked why should such implements appear amongst the sacred altar-stones.

Altoir-beg.—Almost immediately facing the modern doorway, and a large portion of the cashel wall recently erected by the Board of Works, occurs a second altar, which is known to the islanders by the above name. It consists of a quadrangular mass of solid uncemented masonry, measuring five feet six inches by as nearly as possible five feet. It is three feet in height, and dis-

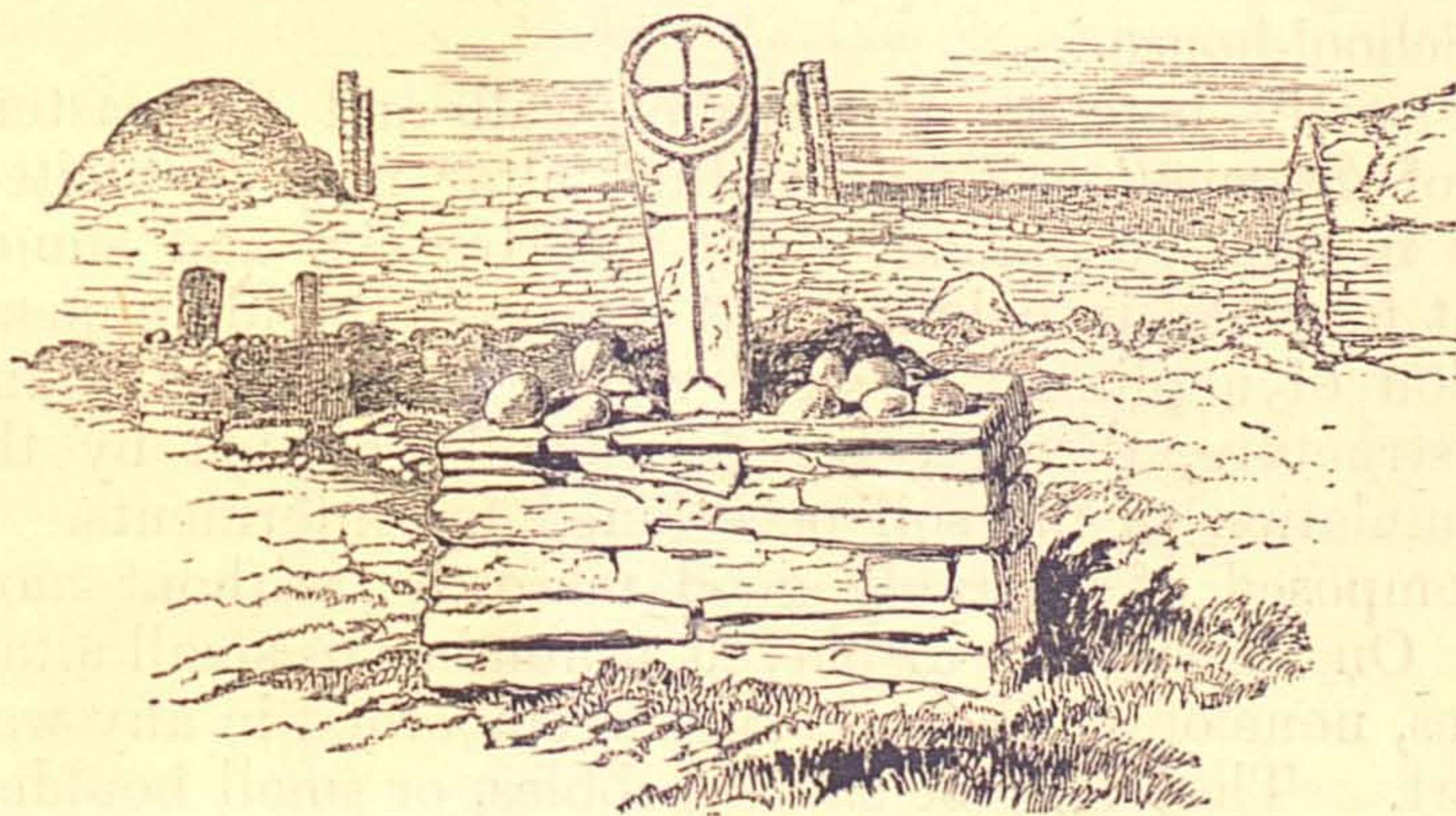


Fig. 34.—The Station called *Altoir-beg*.

plays upon its upper surface a considerable number of stones, similar in character to those already described as existing on *Cloca-breaca*. Here, however, they are of small size, and amongst them not a single specimen artificially smoothed or bearing the figure of a cross is to be found. They would, as a rule, appear to be water-worn pebbles picked up from the seashore. From the centre of the mass rises a stone of the monumental class, bearing a remarkably well-designed incised cross, or rather two crosses of early type, one over the other. The upper

figure, which may be considered complete in itself, is of the Greek pattern, and is surrounded by a double circle. The vertical and horizontal lines of this design terminate in small triangular expansions which merge into the inner circle, as shown in the accompanying illustration.

The lower cross descends from the base of the outer circle nearly to the table of the altar. It is in the Latin style, the three upper members being of nearly equal length, and the lower portion, or shaft, considerably longer. The lines forming the cross bifurcate at their extremities. The face of the stone, only, bears any trace of carving. In fig. 34, *Cloca-breaca* appears in the middle distance, to the left, and portion of *Teach Molaise* to the right. Further off are seen part of the main dividing wall of the cashel, the ancient and modern gables of *Teampull-na-Teinidh*, and the dome of the School-house.

Directly between the cashel wall and the eastern end of *Teampull-na-Bfear*, a third altar may be visited. It is in plan an oblong, eight feet by six, and stands about four feet in height. At its southern side appears portion of a plinth, or step, which may extend round the structure, the rest being probably hidden by the accumulation of the soil occasioned by interments. It is composed of tolerably good masonry, without mortar. On its face are displayed a number of small altar-stones, none of which are carved or smoothed in any way by art. They may be shore pebbles, or small boulders found upon the surface of the island. Set in the centre of the quadrangle is a very curious stone, which it is, perhaps, somewhat fanciful to consider a cross. It is small and uncarved, with a top very like an extremely deep crutch-head, and may possibly be a rude attempt at the formation of a cross "potent," or of the crutched class. A monument of this, in Ireland, rare variety, may be seen, or was to be seen, near the old church of Kilnaboy, county Clare. I have read somewhere that it has disappeared, but I fortunately retain a drawing of it made by myself many years ago. The shaft, which was inserted in the cleft of a large stone, or rock, stood about three feet in height, and was surmounted by a beam, the arms

of which slightly curved upwards. At the extremity of each arm, on the upper surface of the stone, was carved, in considerable relief, a bearded human face; and midway between the faces, right over the shaft, was a well-executed representation of a pair of clasped hands. Altogether, the style of the sculpturing did not appear to be older than late mediæval times. The crutched cross was supposed to symbolize a staff upon which one could lean while walking or resting. In the *Journal, R.H.A.A.I.*, some time since, appeared an account (accompanied by a beautiful woodcut) of a crutched *bachal*, or pastoral staff, formed of bronze, which had no doubt belonged to an eminent saint, or bishop of the Irish Church, who must have flourished some time previous to the Anglo-Norman invasion of this country.

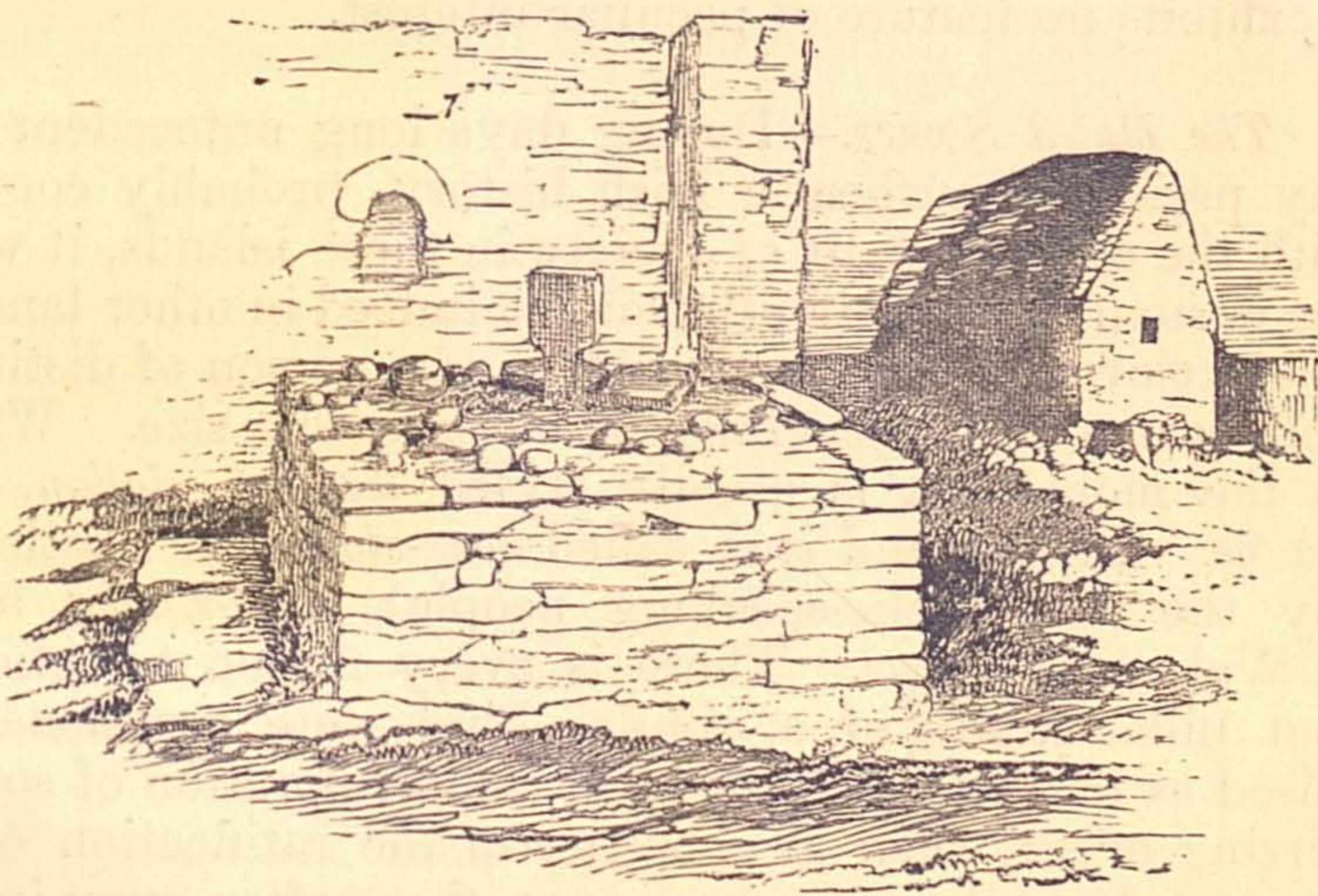


Fig. 35.—The Eastern *Altair*.

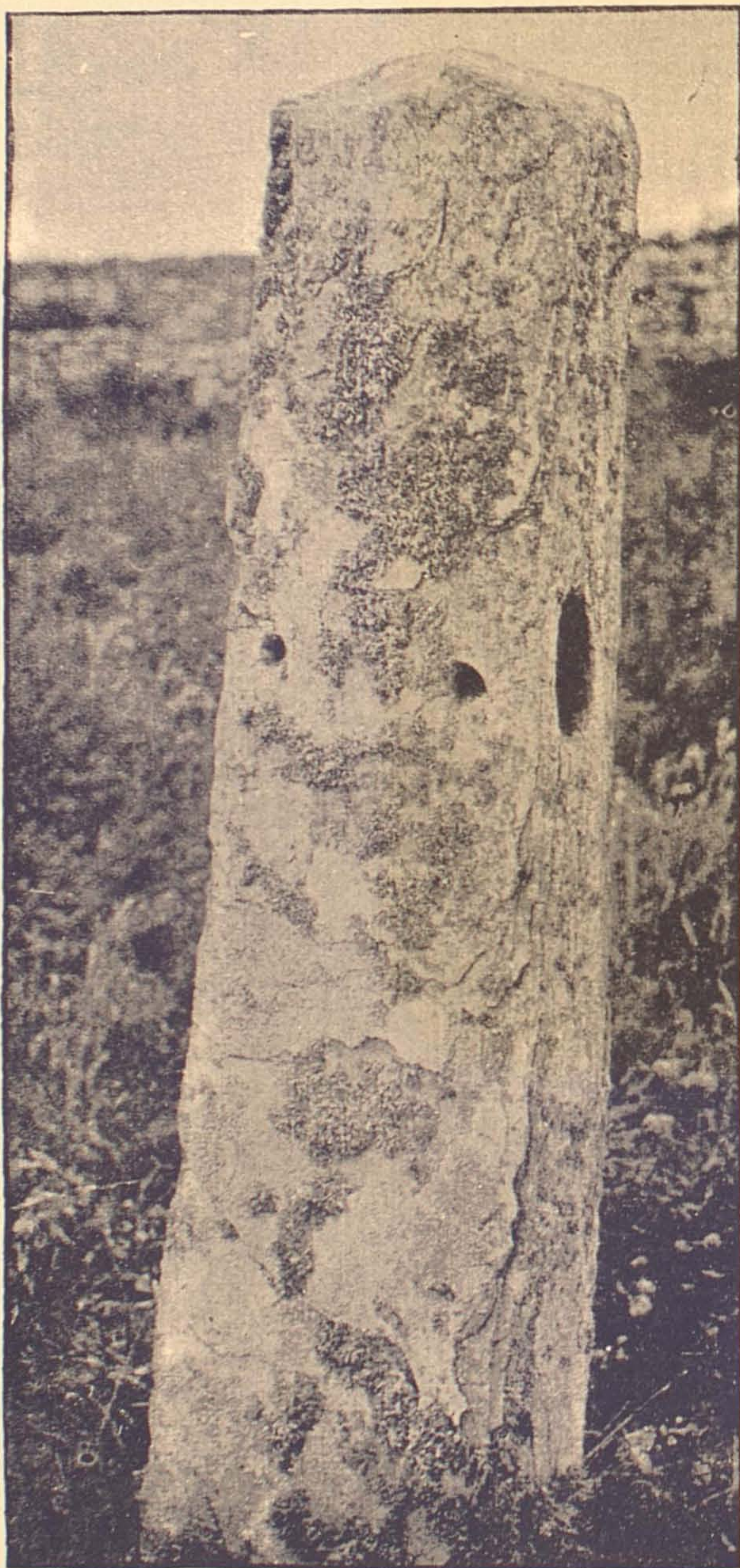
The sketch here given represents the Eastern Altar, and its remarkable “cross,” as seen by a person looking westward. Behind it appears part of the eastern gable of *Teampull-na-Bfear*, the “Church of the Men,” with its small round-headed window, and north-eastern angle pilaster. To the right is a view of *Teach Molaise*, from the south-east; and, further in the distance, may

be noticed a few feet of the cashel wall, as seen from the interior.

A fourth altar stands right up against the cashel wall, on the exterior, upon the south side of the curve. In all points of construction it is very similar to that last noticed. It is, however, somewhat smaller, and no stones appear upon its table, which is overgrown with herbage. It supports one of the most elegant of the early cross-inscribed stones to be met with in Ireland, and of which a drawing and description will be found further on. It had, until recently, no connexion with the site it now occupies, having been brought from the cemetery adjoining the "Church of the Men," within the cashel, and placed, where it now incongruously stands—as the natives assert—by the Board of Works' "conservers." It did not seem to me necessary to draw the altar, as it exhibits no feature of peculiar interest.

The Holed Stones.—During days long antecedent to any period of authentic Irish history, probably coeval with the earliest state of society in these islands, it was the custom here, and in Britain, as indeed in other lands, to erect over the last resting-place of a person of distinction a monolith, generally of considerable size. With us the monument is usually styled *leagaun*, *dallan*, or *coirthe*. In England it is called *hoar-stone*; in Scotland (by the non-Gaelic-speaking people), *hare-stane*; and in Wales, *maengwyr*. There is every reason to believe that pillar-stones of a similar kind were occasionally raised as boundary marks, or in commemoration of some stirring event, such as a battle, or the ratification of a treaty. In style and appearance these often very interesting remains present an infinite variety. Not a few would seem to be simply boulders placed on end by human art; others look as if they had been rudely quarried; and a considerable number, in their smooth and water-worn aspect, suggest the idea that they had been lifted from the bed of a river. Many are thin flat flags of an irregular form; others are almost rudely quadrangular in plan, while some examples, probably of later date, appear to have been artificially rounded, and





THE HOLE-STONE IN MEN'S CEMETERY, INSIDE CASHEL OF INISMURRAY, CO. SLIGO.

From a Photograph by Mr. R. Welch, taken in 1892.

almost polished. Of the last-mentioned class a fine historical example occurs in *Reilig-na-ree*, or King's Burial-ground, at Rathcroghan, in the county Roscommon. It is the monument of Dathy (early fifth century), the last pagan monarch of Ireland, who was killed by lightning at the foot of the Alps, while engaged in one of his customary raids. It is recorded that the monarch's body was religiously carried to Erin, and interred at Rathcroghan; and the *dallan* there remaining has, from time immemorial, been associated with the name of Dathy. That pillar-stones, in character not to be distinguished from those of an undoubtedly pagan age, were occasionally erected over the graves of a number of our earliest ecclesiastics is a fact which cannot be denied. Witness on Aran, at *Teampull-an-Ceathruir Aluinn*, the "Church of the Four Beautiful Saints," the truly archaic-looking pillars of Fursey, Brendan, Conall, and Berchan. See also the ogam-inscribed stone of St. Monaghan, not far from Kilmalkedar, county Kerry. But numerous other examples might be adduced. In some of the pagan, as well as in a number of the undoubtedly Christian memorials of this class, artificial apertures sometimes appear. These are of various sizes, from that of a large bowl, to such as would little more than admit of the insertion of a finger. The earlier perforations are comparatively large, and it is believed that they were anciently connected with religious rites of some kind, and as channels for the interchange of solemn oaths, promises, and so forth.

Remains of this class are usually, in English, known by the name of *Holed Stones*. Examples presenting small apertures, and apparently belonging to Christian times and people, are to be noted in connexion with a number of our oldest ecclesiastical establishments, and in districts widely apart. Striking instances occur in the cemetery of Kilmalkedar, county Kerry; at St. Kieran's Church, called *Mainistir*, Aran; at Kil-fountain (*Cill-Fintain*), county Cork, and elsewhere. The pillars, presumably of Christian times, in which these perforations constitute so puzzling a feature, are almost invariably inscribed with the figure of a cross,

more or less elaborately designed, but always of a primitive type. They are universally held in high veneration by the neighbouring people, partly, it would seem, from the mystery attending the perforation, but perhaps chiefly from the fact of the sacred emblem which they bear being, as a rule, highly conspicuous.

Inismurray presents three fine specimens of the pillar, two of which must be considered valuable and most rare examples of the "holed" class. For reasons presently to be explained these are sometimes called *Praying Stones* by the natives. The more important stands on the southern side of *Teampull-na-Bfear*, at a little distance from that structure. It measures four feet in height, eleven and a-half inches in breadth at top, one foot one inch at base, and about seven inches in thickness. A glance at fig. 36, No. 2, affords a better idea of the graceful cross which has been incised upon the front, or western side of the stone, than would a mere verbal description. It may be observed, however, that the arms and head of the figure terminate in spirals, like those found upon the celebrated alphabet stone at Kilmalkedar, the work upon which has been held, by our best authorities on such matters, to belong to the sixth, or at latest to the seventh century of the Christian era. The monument faces east and west; its edges and eastern side are plain. As will be observed in fig. 36, No. 1, the eastern face exhibits two holes of a size just large enough to admit the insertion of a fairly developed thumb. These orifices extend through the adjoining angles of the stone, and open out at its sides in apertures sufficiently spacious to receive the fingers of a hand of ordinary proportions. In connexion with this pillar a custom, which is worthy of record, very generally prevails. Women who expect shortly to become mothers are wont hither to resort for the purpose of praying for a happy issue from the perils of their impending travail. The natives assert that death in childbirth is an unknown calamity upon the island. The postulants kneel, passing their thumbs into the front, and their fingers into the side openings, by which means a firm grasp of the angles of the stone is

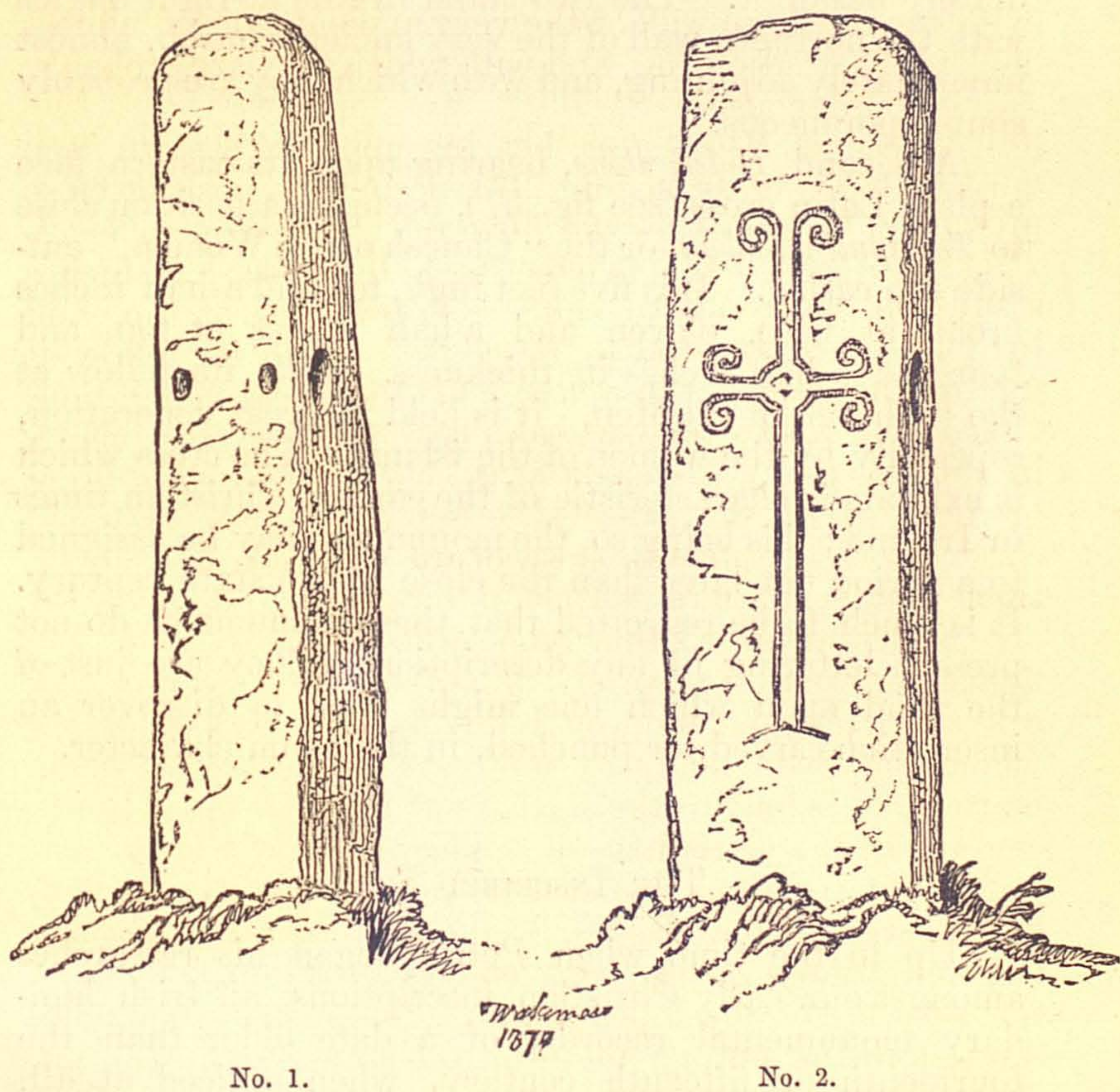


Fig. 36.—Holed Stone at *Teampull-na-Bfear*, resorted to by Women. No. 1, Half-side View; No. 2, Nearly Front View.

obtained. They are thus enabled to rise from their act of obeisance with a minimum of strain or difficulty.

A pillar-stone unperforated and uninscribed, of about the same dimensions as that just noticed, is seen immediately beside it. The two stand in line at right angles with the northern wall of the very ancient church, almost immediately adjoining, and with which they are probably contemporaneous.

A second *Holed stone*, bearing upon its eastern face a plain Latin cross (see fig. 37), occupies a position close to *Teampull-na-mban*, or the "Church of the Women," outside the cashel. It is five feet high, ten and a-half inches broad at base, eleven and a-half inches at top, and four and a-half inches in thickness. Like its fellow at the "Church of the Men," it is held in great veneration, especially by the women of the island. The cross which it exhibits is characteristic of the earliest Christian times in Ireland; this being so, the monument may be assigned to a period not later than the close of the sixth century. It is much to be regretted that these monuments do not present lettering of any description. They are just of the kind upon which one might hope to discover an inscription carved, or punched, in the ogam character.

THE INSCRIBED STONES.

Up to the time when Petrie began his researches amongst our early Christian inscriptions, all Irish lapidary monumental records, of a date older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century, when noticed at all, were supposed to have been engraved in Hebrew, Phœnician, Greek, or other foreign characters. Nobody appears to have known anything about them; and often exquisitely-beautiful crosses, and other ornaments by which they are very frequently accompanied, were looked upon only as evidences of barbarous fancy, or of ingenious, misspent industry. Now, however, owing to the steady and conscientious labours of a few true antiquaries, we have learnt to prize what time has left, and to understand the value of records in stone and

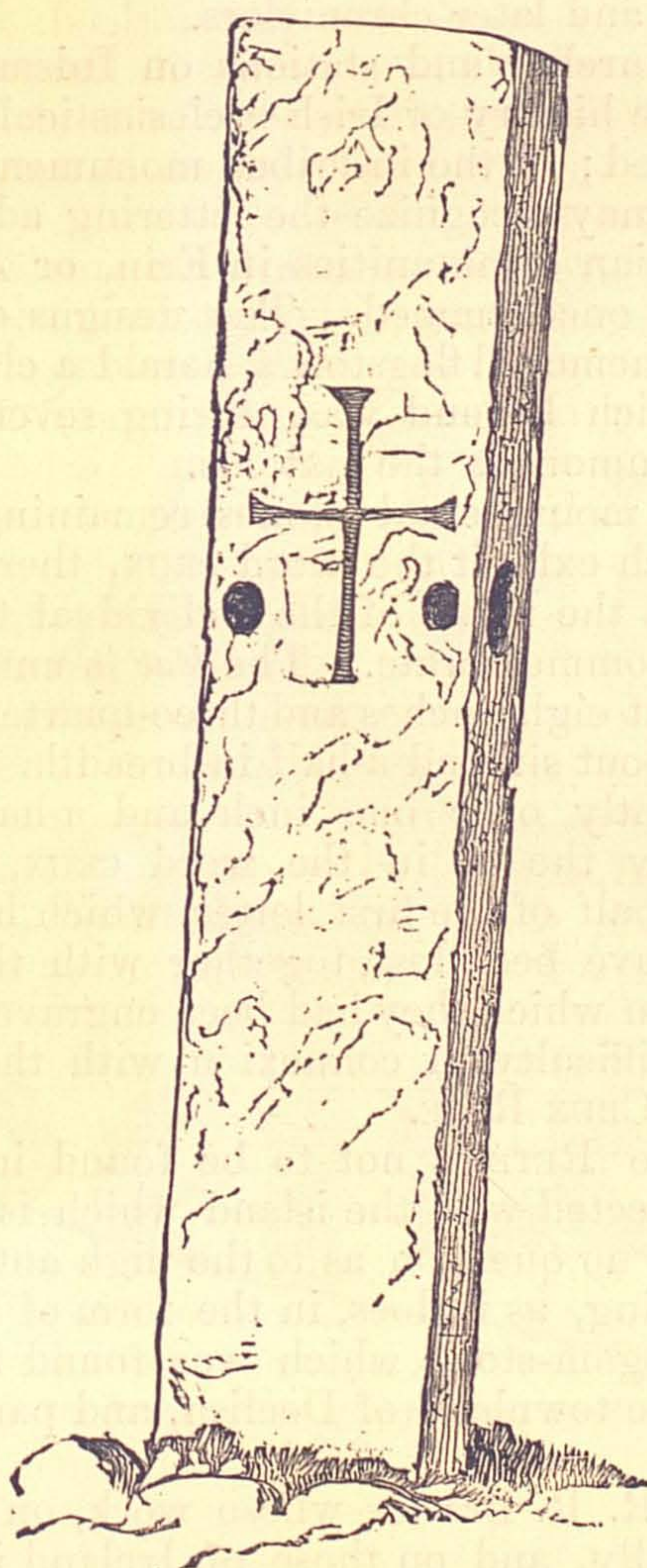


Fig. 37.—Holed Stone near *Teampull-na-mban*, or “Church of the Women.”

metal which, when properly studied, become historical works, eminently more eloquent and instructive than the generally misleading compilations bequeathed to us by mediæval and later chroniclers.

In the churches and stations on Inismurray a first chapter in the history of Irish ecclesiastical architecture may be studied; in the inscribed monumental stones remaining we may recognize the lettering adopted by the earlier Christian communities in Erin, or *Scotia*, as this country was once named. The designs on several of the *leacs*, or memorial flagstones, herald a class of artistic work for which Ireland was, during several centuries, pre-eminent amongst the nations.

Of three monumental stones remaining upon Inismurray, which exhibit the word CRUX, there is only one which retains the name of the individual the work was intended to commemorate. The *leac* is unusually small, measuring but eight inches and three-quarters in extreme length, by about six and a-half in breadth. The letters average slightly over one inch and a-half in height. Unfortunately the c, in the word CRUX, and, in the second line, half of the first letter, which had evidently been an R, have been lost, together with the portion of the stone upon which they had been engraved; but there can be no difficulty in connexion with the reading of the legend—CRUX RETE.

The name RETE is not to be found in any list of persons connected with the island which is now known. There can be no question as to the high antiquity of the name, occurring, as it does, in the form of RITE, upon a remarkable ogam-stone which was found in a *killeen* at Leades, in the townland of Deelish, and parish of Aghabullog.

The late R. R. Brash—whose work, on ogam monuments generally, and on those of Ireland in particular, should be in every antiquarian library—thus wrote (see *Journal, R.H.A.A.I.*, vol. i., 3rd Series, Part II., p. 258): “The patronymic ‘Rite’ is a very usual one on these (ogam) monuments; we have it in various forms, as ‘Rite’ and ‘Ret’; and we have it also as ‘Rett,’ on the Cahernagat stone, and as ‘Ritti’ on stones at Ballinrannig and



Scale of 4 Inches.

Fig. 38.—Inscribed *Leac* in Modern Niche in Cashel.

Greenhill." This stone now stands in a modern recess in the cashel wall, one of those "restored by the Board of Works, as stations (?), and containing crosses carved on flagstones, but which were evidently the vestiges of steps, placed at regular intervals, for the purpose of enabling the defenders to reach the ramparts." The historian adds in a note, "These flagstones were found in various parts of the enclosure." See *History of Sligo*, by Lieut.-Col. Wood-Martin, p. 151.

A second example of a stone bearing the word CRUX, with the name which followed lost, is here figured. It is of irregular form, as are all early remains of its class found in Ireland, and it seems water-worn, as if taken from the sea-shore. The cross which it bears is of the Latin type, with a circle in the centre, and a small pellet within the extremity of each member. The figure, which measures twelve inches in length, and eight and a-half in breadth, is sunk, leaving the central boss and pellets in relief, and flush with the surface of the stone. The form of the letters in the word CRUX indicates a very early age. The characters may be described as partaking largely of the late Roman fashion, the c, r, and u being very similar to their equivalents carved on the Kilmalkedar alphabet stone, the inscription on which was believed by Dr. Petrie to belong to the sixth or seventh century.

The flag is now placed in *Teach Molaise*. It and the Rete stone, as well as two others, which shall presently be described, appear to have hitherto escaped the notice of collectors of Irish inscriptions.

It is a great pity that in fig. 40, page 84, we possess but about half of what must have been a valuable and interesting memorial-stone. As in the example last described, of the inscription only the initial word CRUX remains. The letters are of early form, but it is probable that the legend is of somewhat later date than others which are found on the island; and that such is the fact may be judged from the character of the accompanying cross, the design of which is peculiar, and suggestive of a period when no inconsiderable progress had been made in the art of lapidary engraving.

Of the cross in question, which appears to have been

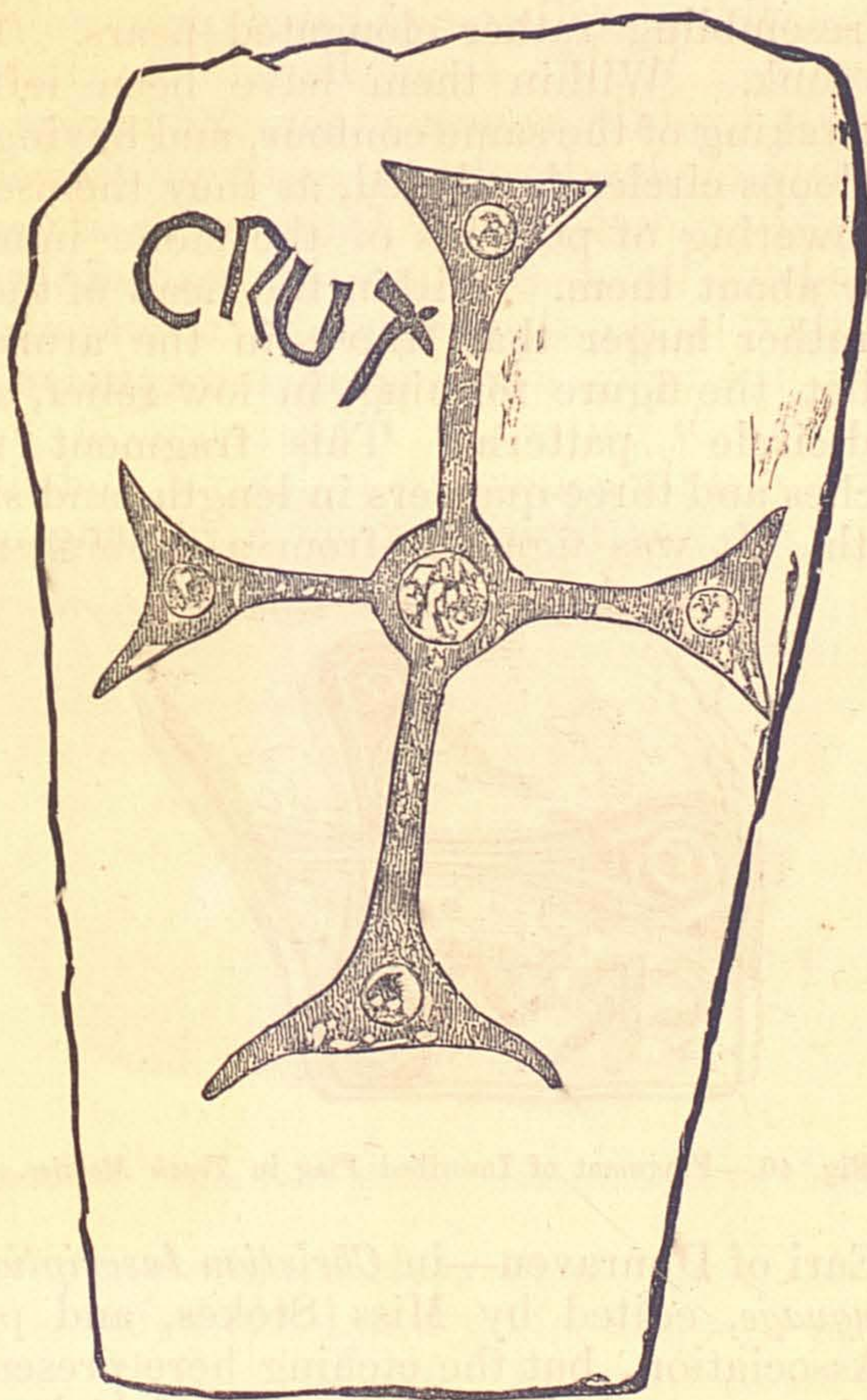


Fig. 39.—Flag in *Teach Molaise*.

of the Latin form, the head, arms, and a small portion of the shaft remain. The upper members spring from the intersection in gradually curved and expanding figures, resembling rather elongated pears. They are slightly sunk. Within them have been left narrow bands partaking of the same contour, and having in their terminal loops circles developed, as they themselves are, by the lowering of portions of the stone immediately around or about them. Within the head of the cross is a ring rather larger than those in the arms, enclosing a pellet, the figure forming, in low relief, a regular "cup-and-circle" pattern. This fragment measures seven inches and three-quarters in length, and six inches in breadth. It was figured—from a rubbing made by

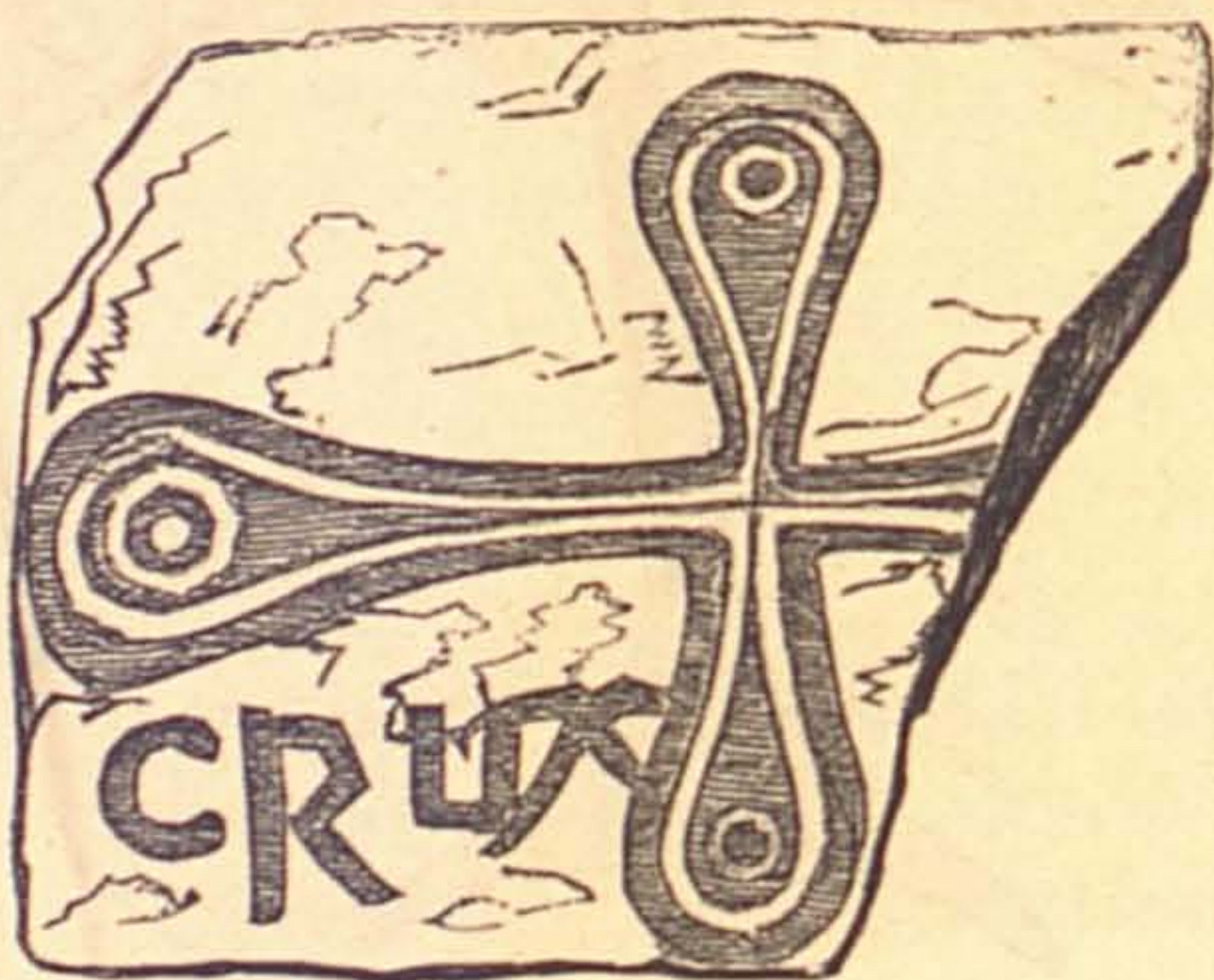


Fig. 40.—Fragment of Inscribed Flag in *Teach Molaise*.

the late Earl of Dunraven—in *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*, edited by Miss Stokes, and published by this Association, but the etching here presented was reduced from a rubbing, and a careful drawing in pencil, which I made with the stone before me. It differs, in some points of detail, from the illustration given in the valuable work referred to.

Perhaps the most puzzling of all the ancient Christian inscriptions remaining in Ireland is one which appears upon a rather thin flat stone, eleven inches in length, lying upon the altar of *Teach Molaise*: it has not hitherto been noticed. Most of the characters appear clear and well defined, and yet it seems impossible to ascertain the meaning of the legend. The illustration (fig. 41)

has been made from a plaster cast of the stone, kindly supplied to me by Mr. Richard Jones, of Streedagh. In order, if possible, to bring out the lettering, I caused a printer's roller to be passed over the surface of the plaster; for this reason all the sunken scribings, and accidental abrasions, appear in white; a second cast I kept intact, in the hope that by bringing the two before the notice of antiquaries—accustomed to decipher cryptic engravings—some idea of the significance of the inscription might be arrived at. In this expectation I have been, up to the present, disappointed.

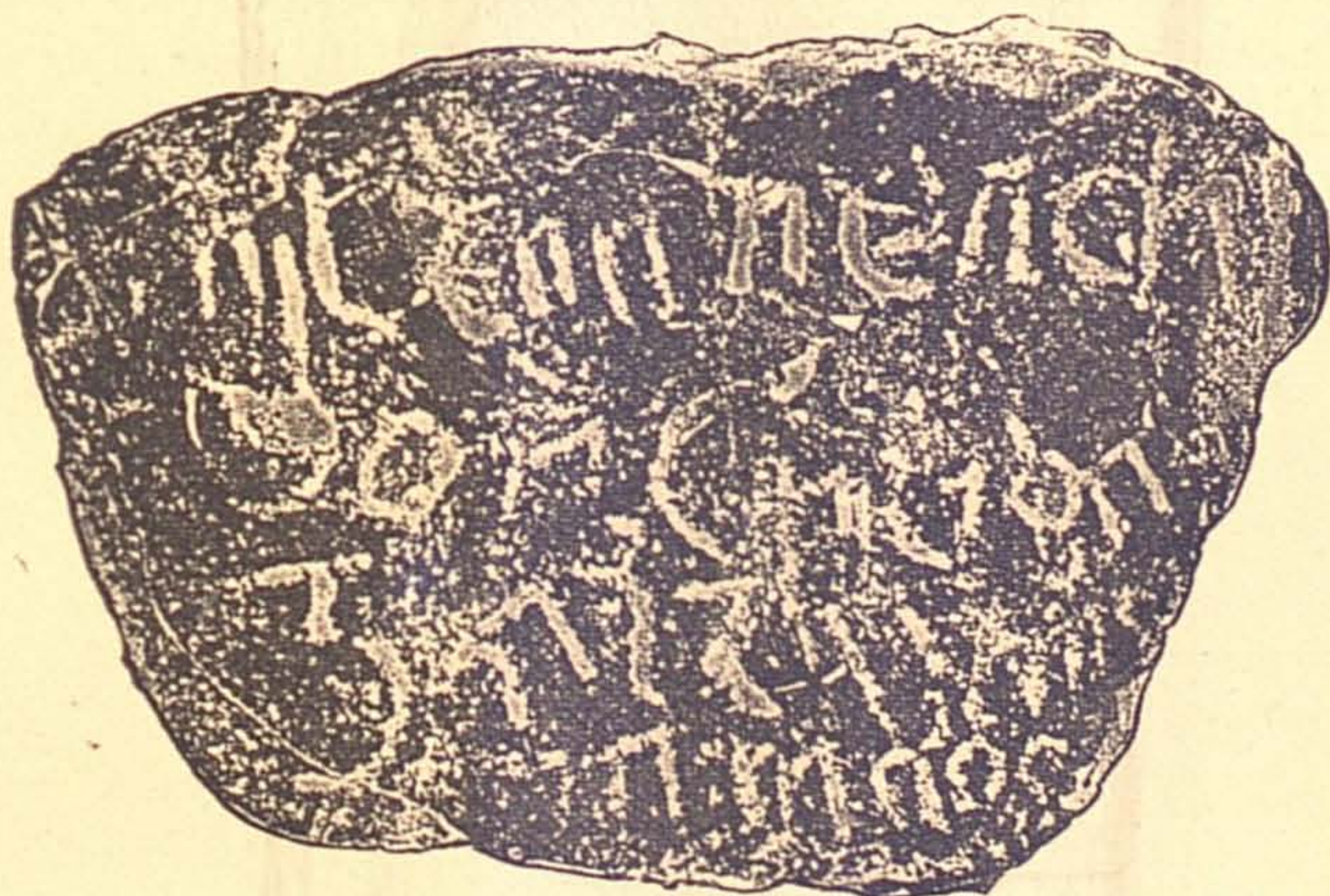


Fig. 41.—Inscribed Flag in *Teach Molaise*. Inscription not yet deciphered.

As long as any of the natives can recollect, the memorial-stone (fig. 42) which I now notice has been preserved upon the altar of *Teach Molaise*. It is eleven inches and three-quarters in length, and in form may be described as a quadrilateral, each face measuring, as nearly as possible, four inches and three quarters in width at the head of the stone. Upon one of its surfaces a cross, bearing, at the intersection, a circle, has been engraved. Upon the opposite plane of the stone (the back or base of the monument, if we assume the cross to indicate its front), in rather early Irish characters, is found the inscription—

OR DO MURCHAD.

“A Prayer for Murchad.”

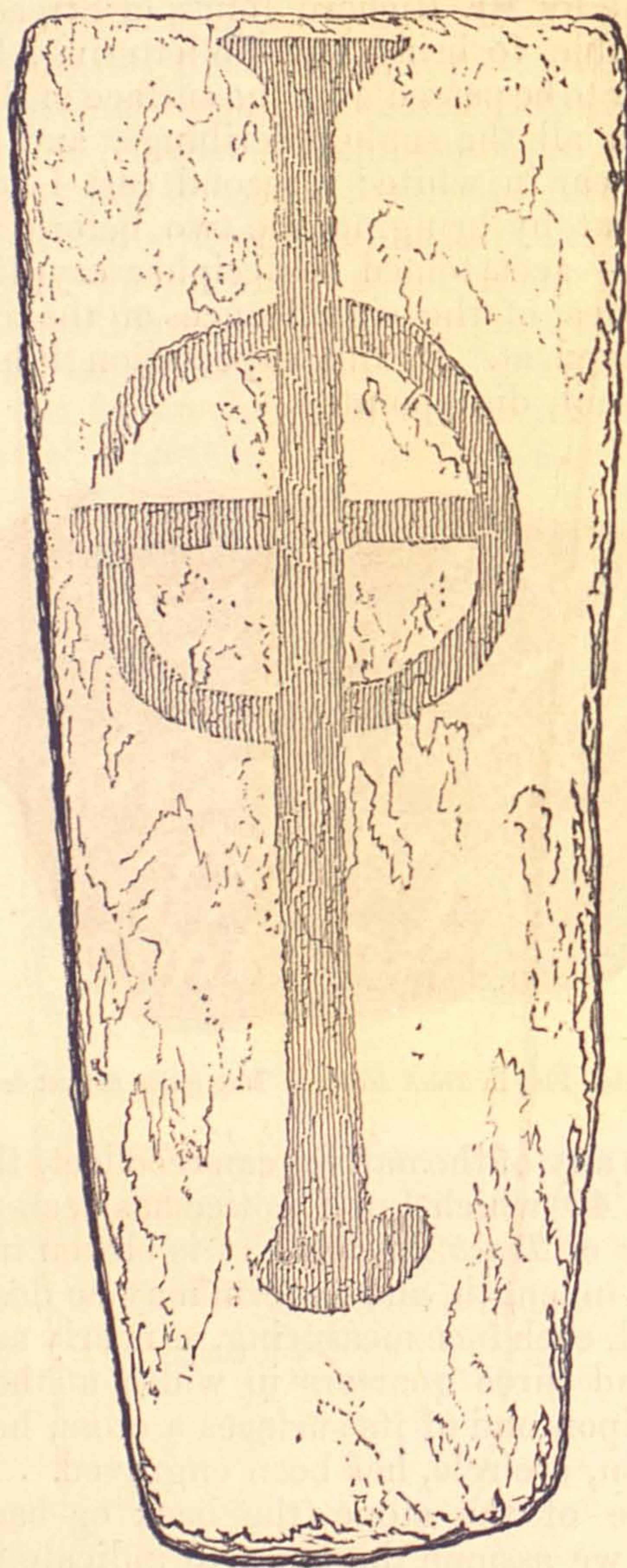


Fig. 42 (No. 1).—Stone of Murchad in *Teach Molaise*.

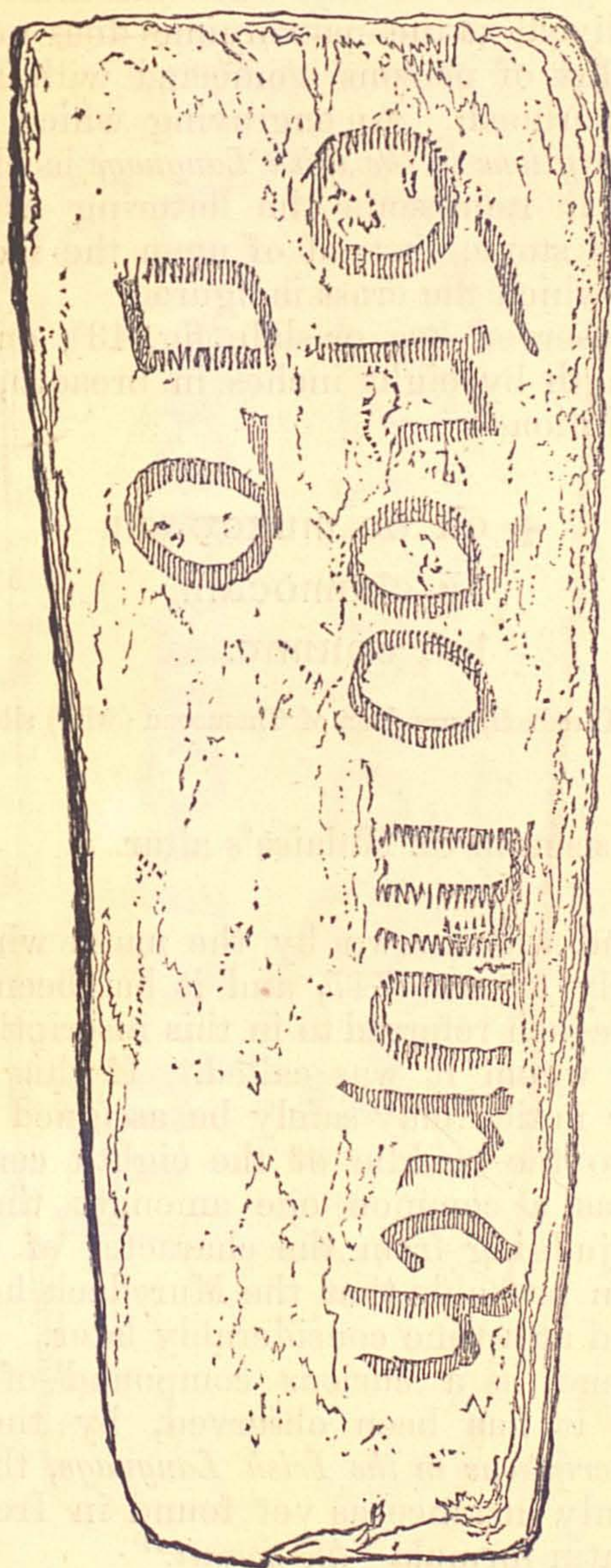


Fig. 42 (No. 2).—Inscription on opposite side of Stone of Murchad.

It is now impossible to say who this individual was, or when he lived, as the patronymic does not occur in any known list of persons connected with Inismurray or its neighbourhood. An engraving which appears in *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language* is slightly misleading, for it represents the lettering as being on a side of this stone, instead of upon the face opposite to that upon which the cross is figured.

A well-preserved *leac*, or slab (fig. 43), one foot four inches in length by eight inches in breadth, and bearing the inscription—

✠ ōr do muredach
hū chomocain
hīc dormit.

“Pray for Muredach, grandson of Chomocan (who) sleeps here.”

is also to be seen on St. Molaise's altar.

The island was known by the name which it now bears as early as A.D. 747, and it has been suggested that the Muredach referred to in this inscription was the person after whom it was called. If this be so, the record under notice may safely be assigned to a period antecedent to the middle of the eighth century. But the name was a common one amongst the Scoti, or Irish; and, judging from the character of the letters, it would seem probable that the Muredach here commemorated lived at a time considerably later.

The legend is a curious compound of Irish and Latin; and it has been observed, by the editor of *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*, that we have here “the only instance as yet found in Ireland of the use of the Latin formula—*hic dormit*.”

In a drawing of this stone, copied from a rubbing made by the late Earl of Dunraven, and published in the work just quoted from, the little cross at the commencement of the legend has been omitted.

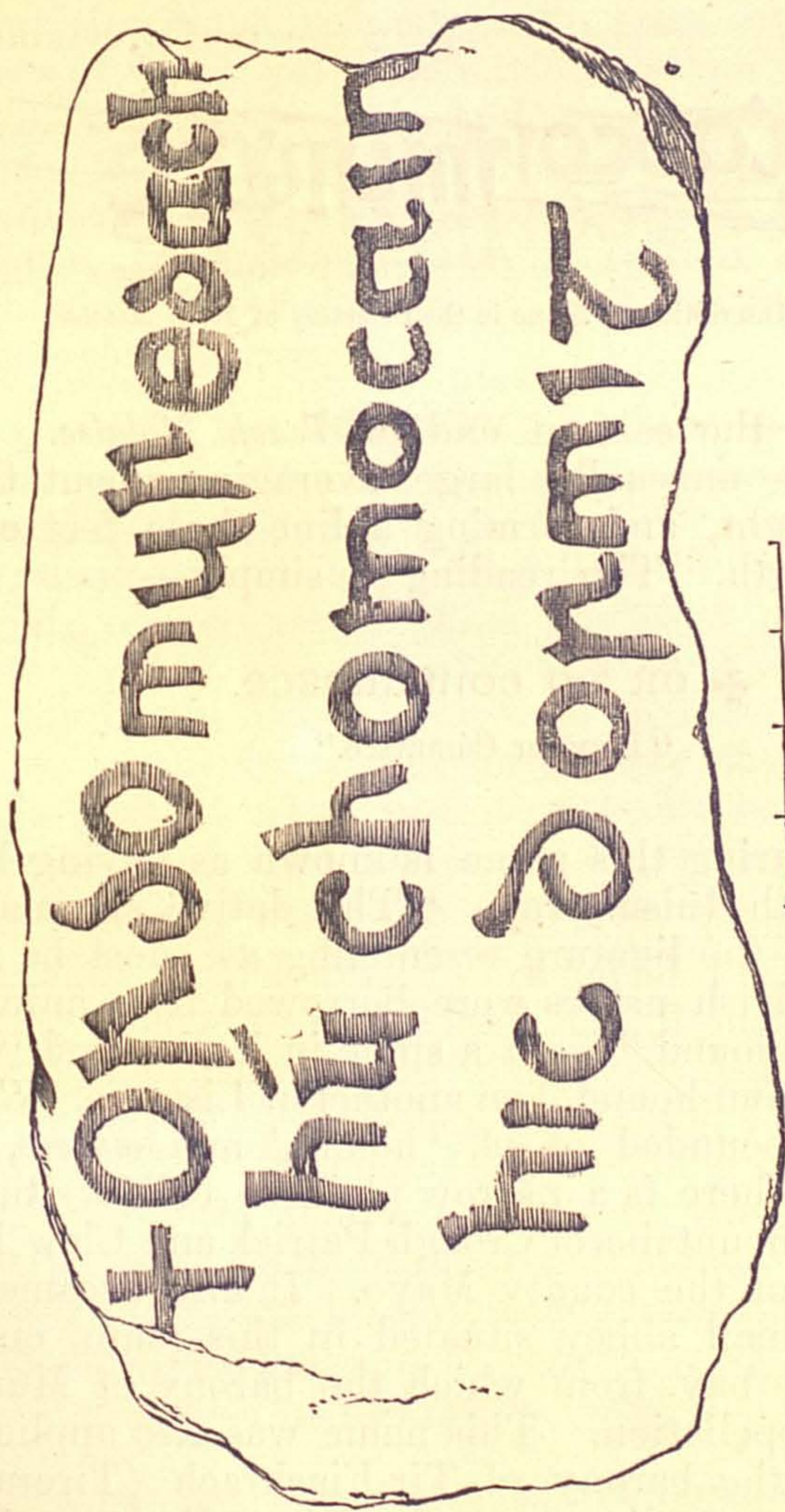


Fig. 43.—Stone of Muredach, grandson of Chomocan, in *Teach Molaise*.

The following may be considered, with one exception, presently to be noticed, the most remarkable of the inscriptions remaining upon the island. It occurs on a slab of considerable size, lying in the men's cemetery,



Fig. 44.—Inscription on Stone in the Cemetery of *Teach Molaise*.

not far from the eastern end of *Teach Molaise*. The characters are unusually large, averaging about three inches in height, and forming a line three feet eight inches in length. The reading is simply—

✠ OR DO COINMURSCE.

“Pray for Cúmursce.”

No person bearing this name is known as having been connected with Inismurray. “The dative singular of *cú* is ‘coin’—the ligature resembling *um* must be read *inm*.” Many Irish names were borrowed from animals: Sogha, “greyhound,” is on a stone in Kells; and “Cúodhar,” the “dun-hound,” on another at Lismore. “This name is compounded of *cú*, ‘hound,’ and *mursce*, ‘of Murrisk.’” There is a narrow plain so called situated between the mountains of Croagh Patrick and Clew Bay, in the west of the county Mayo. It also became the name of a small abbey situated in this plain, on the margin of the bay, from which the barony of Murrisk derived its appellation. This name was also applied to a district in the barony of Tir-Fiachrach (Tireragh), county Sligo, extending from the River Easky to Dunacoy. One of the prerogatives of the kings of Cashel, mentioned in the *Book of Rights*, p. 19, was “the drinking of the fresh ale of Magh Muirrsce.” (See *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*.)

Within *Teach Molaise*, lying upon the altar, or projecting masonry, popularly called the "Saint's Bed," may be seen a curious slab, seventeen inches long, by eleven broad, and very thin, which anciently bore an inscription in the Irish character, some few unintelligible traces of which yet remain. The letters were extremely small, closely packed, and slanting in running-hand style. Only here and there can a character be recognized—these were probably capitals. All attempts to recover, by rubbing, even a portion of the writing with which the surface of the slab was covered, resulted in complete failure.

On July the 4th, 1885, while preparing a grave within the walls of *Teampull-na-mban*, for Winifred Heraghty, daughter of one of the chief men residing upon the island, a most interesting discovery was made by the friends of deceased. This consisted of an inscribed stone (fig. 45), measuring two feet eight and a-half inches in length, ten inches in average breadth, and about four inches in thickness. Unfortunately the monument is but a part of what had doubtlessly been a memorial pillar-stone of considerable height, the narrowness of its lateral proportions in no way affording evidence to the contrary. Close to the neighbouring shore of Mayo, at Doonfeeny, near Ballycastle, may be seen a cross-inscribed monolith, only sixteen and a-quarter inches in average breadth, and ten inches in thickness, but which rises to a height of over twenty-one feet above the level of the ground.

The Inismurray fragment is broken at either end, so that unless the missing parts should happily be recovered, no trustworthy idea of the original dimensions of the stone can be formed.

A most important fact in connexion with this waif is that it bears an inscription in the Irish language. The legend consists of two lines, every letter of which, with one exception, is clearly decipherable to any person even slightly familiar with the peculiarities of so-called "Celtic" characters of an early, but by no means the

earliest class, known to students of lapidary writings, as found in the British Islands. It runs as follows:—

.....ΔΙΛΑΘ ΟCΥC ΔΡ ΜΑΕΛΒΡ∴
ΟΡΟΡC ΟCΥC ΔΡ ΕΙΛΕΙCΕ.

The first five letters would appear to represent the latter portion of a man's name, most probably CΙΝΝΗΔΙΛΑΘ, a name not uncommon amongst the ancient Irish people; the four following letters, ΟCΥC, are equivalent, in English, to the conjunction *and*; the next two are clearly ΔΡ, in English, *for*; we then find ΜΑΕΛΒΡ∴, the termination, at present, of the upper line, which extends close up to the fractured end of the stone. These letters almost certainly stand for part of a name, which there is reason to believe was ΜΑΕΛΒΡΙΓΙΟ, the "*Servant of (St.) Brigid.*"

We now come to the second line, of which the first five letters, on careful examination, will be found to present the name ΟΡΟΡC; ΟCΥC ΔΡ, *and for*, immediately follow, and the line terminates with what seems to be a pretty feminine name, ΕΙΛΕΙCΕ.

In English, then, what remains of the record may be rendered thus:—

..... "ailad, and for Maelbri.....
..... O'Rorc, and for Eileise."

It should be considered absolutely certain that the inscription originally commenced with the usual formula, $\overline{\text{O}}\text{R } \text{O}\text{O}$, or $\overline{\text{O}}\text{R } \Delta\text{R}$, *pray for*; and that a number of names, of which four only are here either wholly or in part preserved, followed.

As has already been shown, Inismurray was, on more occasions than one, the scene of Scandinavian atrocities—slaughter, plundering, and burning. Little more can be said concerning this stone, than that in all likelihood it was originally raised in memory of victims who had miserably perished during one of those relentless forays.

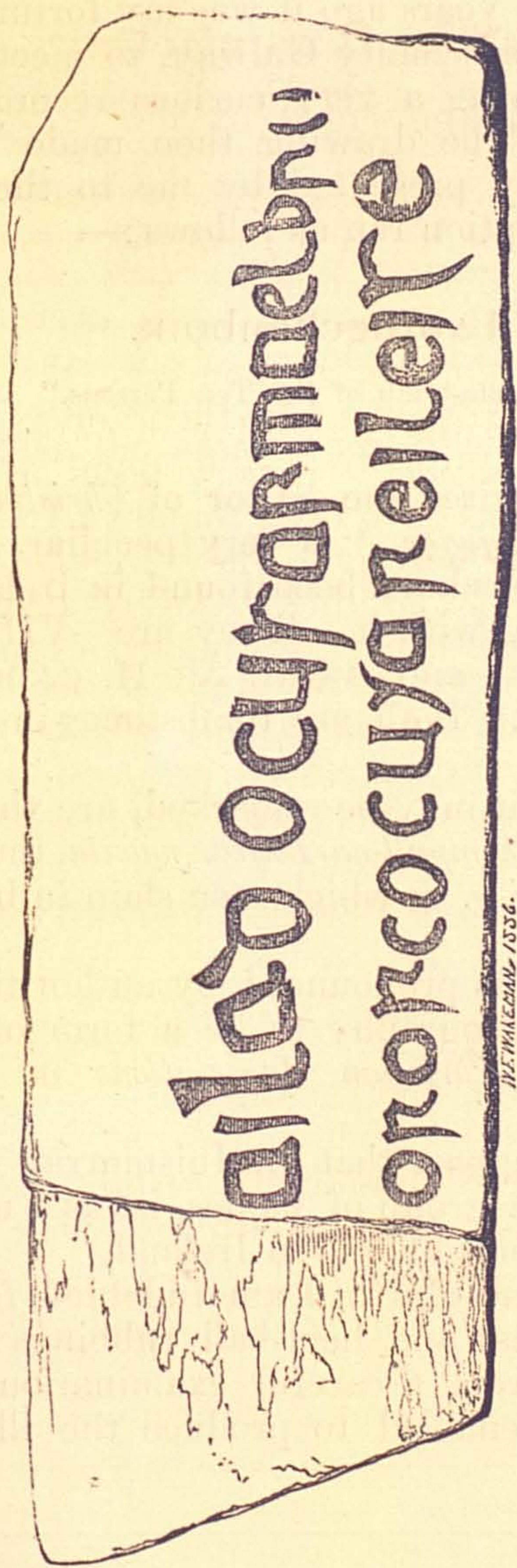


Fig. 45.—Portion of Inscribed Pillar-stone in *Teampull-na-mban*, or the “Church of the Women.”

Elsewhere in Ireland we find monuments bearing no inscribed names but erected over a stated number of individuals. Many years ago it was my fortune, on the Island of Iniscealtra, county Galway, to meet with the base of a cross bearing a very curious record, which I carefully copied. The drawing then made was, with others, subsequently presented by me to the late Dr. Petrie. The inscription ran as follows:—

✠ 1LAD̄oechenboiR.

The “Stone-tomb of the Ten Persons.”

“The formula,” writes the editor of *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*, “is very peculiar, and only two other inscriptions have been found in Ireland which can be classed along with it. They are—VII ROMAN1, The Seven Romans; and ORAIT AR II. CANOIN (*Pray for the Two Canons*). Both are tombstones in the island of Aran.”

On Iniscealtra, it may be remarked, are the remains of a church called *Teampull-na-Bhfear-ngonta*, the “Church of the Slain men,” *i. e.* in which men slain in battle were buried.

The word 1LAD̄ is pronounced by authorities on the subject of Irish paleography to be a form of uLAD̄, a stone tomb. (See *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*.)

It would thus appear that the Inismurray monolith, bearing as it does a group of names, is, as a monument of its interesting kind, unique in Ireland.

To Colonel Wood-Martin I am indebted for the use of a number of grass and heel-ball rubbings of the inscription.¹ It is from a careful examination of these that I have been enabled to produce the illustration, fig. 45.

¹ The theory that the original length of this curious monumental slab had been considerably greater is fully borne out by the discoverers, who state that there are several other fragments still buried in

close proximity to the unearthed portion, but it can hardly be expected that the islanders would consent to disturb their dead for the purpose of recovering the missing pieces.

THE UNLETTERED MONUMENTAL STONES, ETC.

Scattered over the surface of the cashel cemetery, or socketed in the masonry of the several *leachta*, or altars, which form such curious and interesting features among the earlier Christian antiquities of Inismurray, are to be seen a considerable number of memorial pillars and flagstones. Many of these remains are cross-inscribed, and the designs which they exhibit are as various in character as are the monuments themselves, in point of their respective forms and dimensions. It is not to be supposed that the crosses are all of the same age. A

In the Irish *Annals* the following entries are to be met with :—

Chronicon Scotorum, A.D. 1027.

ΜΟΡΤΛΑΙΟ ΜΟΡ 1 ΜΟΥΡ ΝΑΛΑΙΝΝΕ ΗΙ
ΣΧΑΙΡΒΡΕ ΜΟΙΡ ΟΥ ΜΟ ΛΟΙΡΓΤΕΑ ΟΑ
.XX. ΟΕΣ ΟΥΙΝΕ ΟΟ ΜΑΙΤΙΒ ΧΑΙΡΒΡΕ,
ΟΟΥΡ ΡΙ ΟΑΡΤΡΑΙΓΕ, ΟΟΥΡ ΡΙ ΟΟΥΡΒΡΕ,
ΕΤ ΑΙΡΧΙΝΝΕΧ ΟΡΟΜΑ ΕΛΙΑΒ.

“A great loss of life in Inis-na-lainne, in Cairbre-mór, in which were burned twelve score men of the nobles of Cairbre, and the King of Dartraighe, and the King of Cairbre, and the airchinnech of Druim-cliaabh.”

Annals of Loch Cé, A.D. 1029.

ΟΕΘΗ . Η . ΡΥΑΙΡΟ ΟΟΥΡ ΟΕΝΓΟΥΡ . Η .
ΗΔΟΝΓΟΥΡΑ, ΟΟΥΡ ΑΙΡΧΙΝΝΕΧ ΟΡΟΜΑ
ΕΛΙΑΒ, ΟΟΥΡ ΤΡΙ ΠΙΟΙΤ ΟΥΙΝΕ ΕΛΙ ΟΟ ΛΟΡ-
ΕΑΟ ΜΑΙΛΛΕ ΠΡΟΥ, Α ΜΟΥΡ ΝΑ ΛΑΙΝΝΕ.

“Oedh Ua Ruairc, and Oengus Ua hAenghusa, and the airchinnech of Druim-cliaabh, and sixty other persons along with them, were burned in Inis-na-lainne.”

It will thus be seen that the name O'Rorke occurs in the notice in the *Annals*, as well as in the lapidary inscription, though certainly in a different form (*i. e.* ORORC, not Η. ΡΥΑΙΡΟ). The scene of the catastrophe is placed in *Inis-na-lainne*, *i. e.* the island of the spear; this may have been the old pre-Christian designation of the isle of St. Molaise, which still lingered on as an *alias* name, and may be thus rescued from oblivion in the same way that the Map in the State Paper Office has left on record another designation borne by the island at the commencement of the seventeenth century—“Enishe

Humæ.” It may have been called *Inis-na-lainne* (the “Island of the Spear”), from a supposed resemblance in outline to the head of that weapon, even as many localities throughout Ireland have been named from their fancied likeness to some object.

There are no remains of an ancient edifice on any other island off the coast of Carbury. The building in which the tragedy took place must have been of considerable size, for upwards of “twelve-score men of the nobles of Cairbre” perished in the conflagration. The memory of such an event would be likely to linger on in perhaps a more or less disjointed form; indeed most legends, however absurd, are usually founded on some fact, however much that fact may be obscured by incongruous additions or alterations—and thus may not the legend of the profane “Scotchman,” whom the irate saint caused to be consumed by fire for his impiety, be but a mediæval distortion of this dreadful holocaust of the eleventh century; and may not *Teampull-na-Teinidh*, or the Church of the Fire, be the site of the conflagration of 1027 (or 1029). Is it not a curious coincidence that the islanders should still point to a considerable quantity of seemingly highly calcined human bones preserved in a recess of the walls in *Teampull-na-Teinidh*? Some of these have been removed by the officials of the Board of Works.

If it be satisfactorily established that this inscription commemorates the decease of members of the “sterner sex,” it will go far to shake the present tradition, tenaciously held by the islanders, that none but women were ever buried in *Teampull-na-mban*.—W. M.

few, there is every reason to believe, belong to an extremely early period of the Church in Ireland, while others may be assigned to a much later date. The collection, in all probability, comprises examples of every age from the sixth or seventh century down to the twelfth.

In the *Transactions* of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. xxxvii., p. 32, the Right Rev. Charles Graves, Bishop of Limerick, writes: "De Rossi and other antiquaries are inclined to believe that the cross formed by two diameters of a circle, perpendicular to each other, is a representation of the *panis eucharisticus*. From Comte Melchior de Vogüé's work on the Architecture of Central Syria, we learn that crosses thus enclosed in circles were frequently sculptured on lintel-stones over the doors or on the friezes of churches and monastic buildings in that country; and some of these crosses are actually identical in form with the ancient Irish cross, now under consideration, the outlines of the cross being formed of arcs of circles. As the buildings in which they appear were erected in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, it is probable that the form of cross may have been introduced from the East by some of the pilgrim monks who visited Ireland in the very early period of the history of Christianity. But I shall not be surprised if I am told that examples of the use of this Patrick's cross are to be found amongst the ancient Christian remains of Italy or France.

Of the occurrence of this so-called "Patrick's Cross," pure and simple, upon some of the altar-stones on *Cloca-breaca*, I have been able to give several examples. The cross upon the lintel-stone of *Teach Molaise*, though not circle-enclosed, is nevertheless of most ancient style. Crosses enclosed by a circle may be seen upon the lintels of several of our oldest church doorways, most notably on that, already referred to, of St. Fechin, at Fore, county Westmeath. Indeed this form of cross is usually considered the oldest known in Ireland, and to be, in some measure, a national emblem.

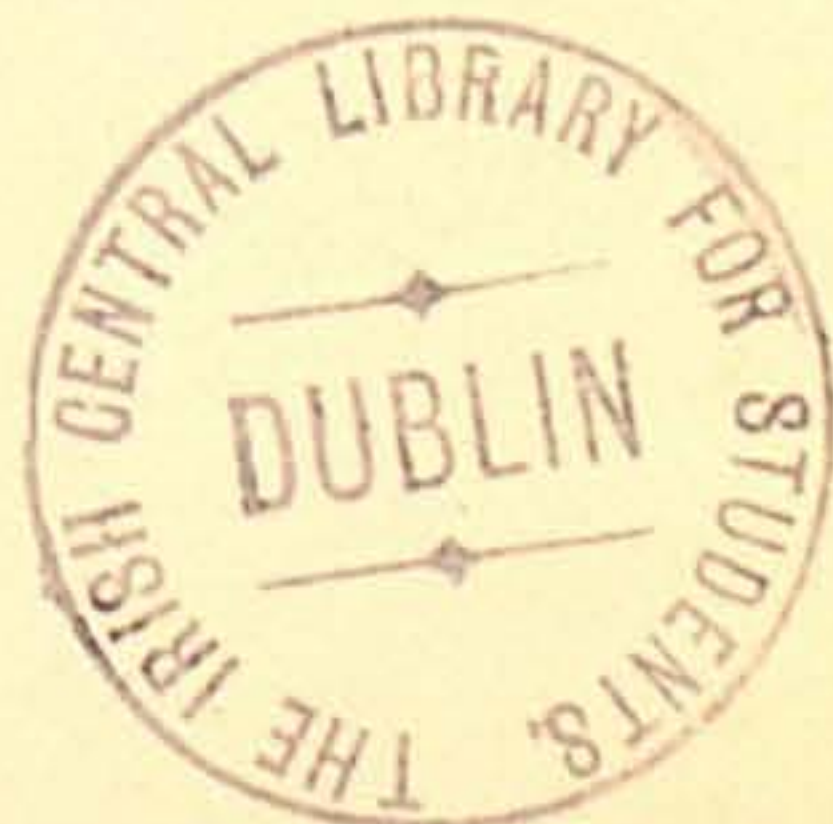
On Inismurray we find examples of a second kind of extremely early cross, of a class which, as far as I am aware, is only found in Ireland, and in Egypt upon the

ruins of Coptic churches of probably the third or fourth century. The Irish and the Eastern designs cannot be distinguished one from the other. Seeing, then, the absolute identity of style in crosses of highly peculiar, intricate, and often elaborate composition found in countries so widely separated as are Erin and Egypt, the question naturally arises, did the Irish receive this cross from the East? At present I do not feel myself at liberty to enlarge on this interesting subject, but I am happy to say that Bishop Graves, who was kind enough to show me a set of drawings made by himself, when recently in Egypt, of a number of the crosses in question, is likely soon to publish them, accompanied by a number of valuable illustrative notes.

The very beautiful slab, of which a most carefully-executed etching is here presented (fig. 46), stands on an altar touching the cashel, on the southern side of its curve. This was not its original position, as when I first visited the island, in company with Colonel Cooper, the stone lay prostrate in the Cemetery of the Men, within the cashel. Its exact measurements can be ascertained on reference to the illustration. The cross exhibits at its head and arms the spiral terminations which we find in connexion with our oldest carvings of the sacred emblem, as in the alphabet-stone at Kilmalkedar, and in the slab of Fintan, at *Cill Fintain*, now Kilfountain, in the parish of Kildrum, county Kerry. Fintan's Slab, besides the saint's name, cut in debased Roman characters, was inscribed with an ogam, which has not yet been read. These inscriptions, and the cross, and the Kilmalkedar alphabet and cross, are considered, on competent authority, to belong, at latest, to the seventh century. At Reask, county Kerry, is another monumental stone showing divergent spiral patterns. It is believed to be as old as the sixth century.

The carving, here for the first time noticed, is the best preserved (and the most strikingly similar to the Coptic crosses, drawn by the Bishop of Limerick) now remaining on Inismurray.

Though there are some important differences in detail observable between figs. 46 and 47, these two monuments



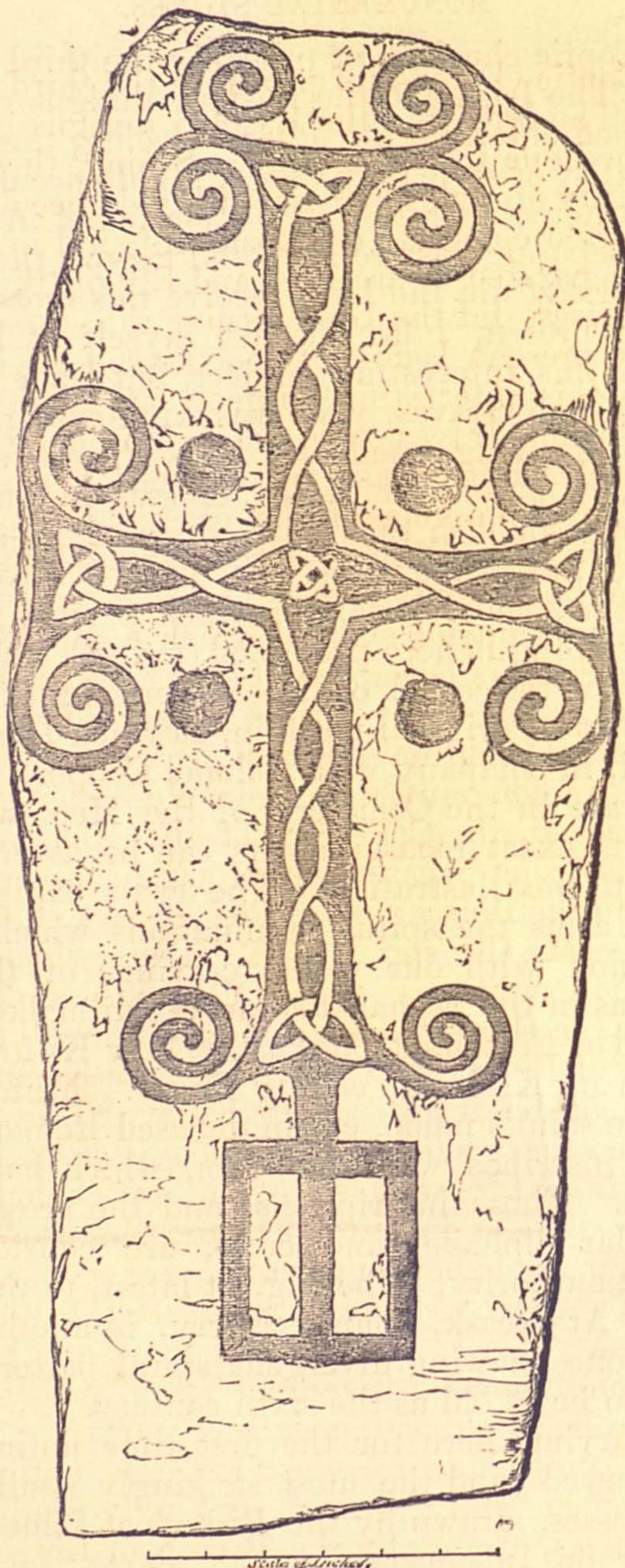


Fig. 46.—Monumental Stone on Altar near *Tober Molaise*, outside the Cashel Wall.
Height, $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

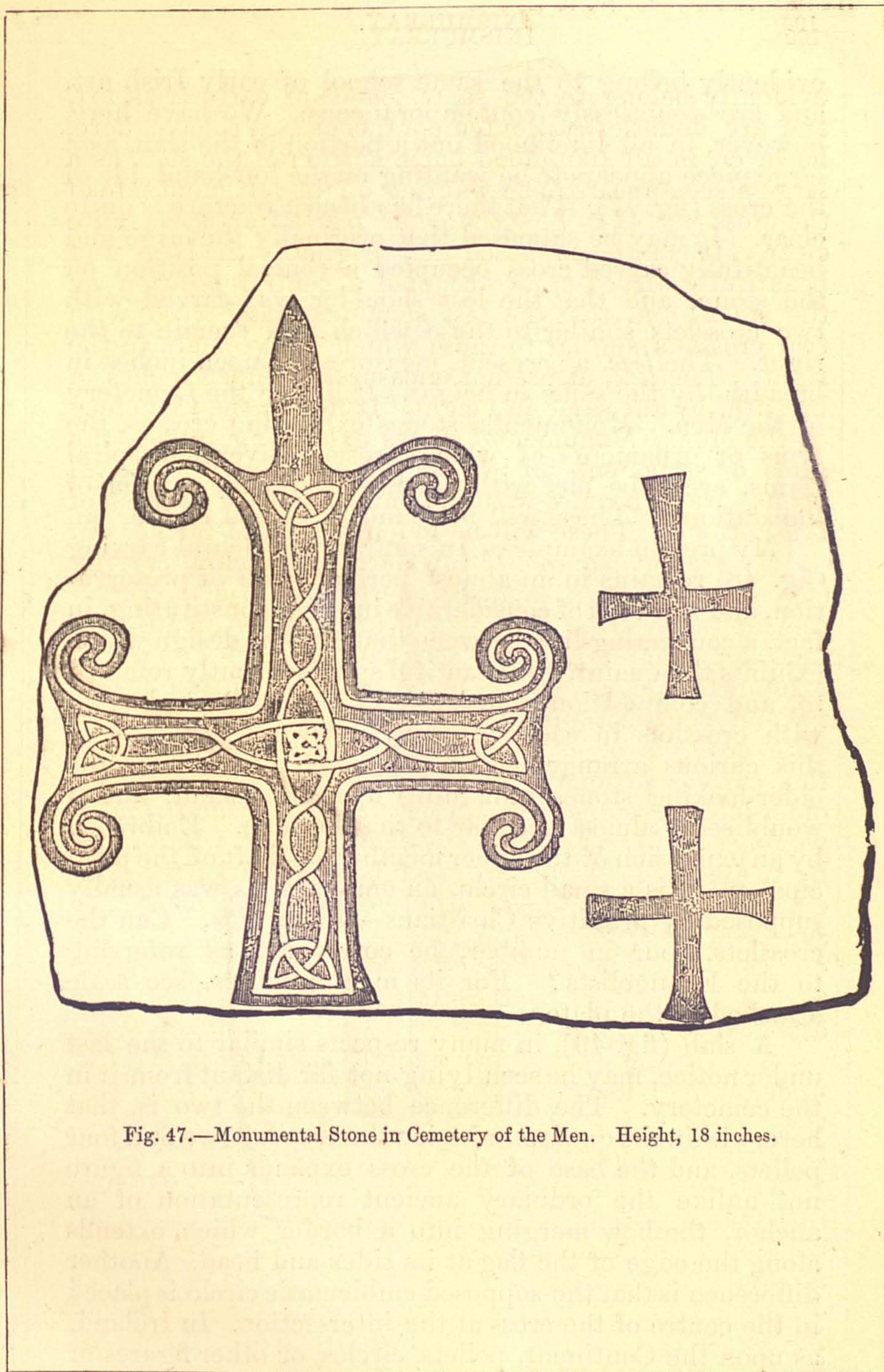


Fig. 47.—Monumental Stone in Cemetery of the Men. Height, 18 inches.

evidently belong to the same school of early Irish art, and are doubtlessly contemporaneous. We have here, however, in all likelihood but a portion of the slab, as a large piece appears to be wanting on the left-hand side of the cross (fig. 47). That there has been a fracture is quite clear. It may be supposed that originally the large and beautifully carved cross occupied a central position on the stone, and that the lost shoulder was carved with two crosslets similar to those which still remain to the right. The *leac*, at present, measures eighteen inches in breadth, by the same in height. It lies in the Cemetery of the Men. Monumental stones exhibiting crosses, the arms or ornaments of which present divergent spiral forms, are to be met with in connexion with several of the stations. These will be found described further on.

My present example of Inismurray sepulchral carving (fig. 48) remains in an almost perfect state of preservation, and is a work of considerable interest, constituting, in fact, a connecting-link between that class of design which exhibits the quaint, yet beautiful spirals recently referred to, and compositions consisting of a main central cross with crosslets in each quadrant. Several instances of this curious arrangement appear upon a number of the older-looking stones remaining upon the island, and it would seem almost peculiar to that locality. Embraced by an expansion of the upper member, or shaft of the principal cross, is a small circle, an emblem—as was usually supposed by primitive Christians—of eternity. Can the crosslets, four in number, be considered as referring to the Evangelists? For its measurements, see scale attached to the plate.

A slab (fig. 49), in many respects similar to the last under notice, may be seen lying not far distant from it in the cemetery. The difference between the two is, that here, within the quadrants beside the crosslets, we find four pellets, and the base of the cross expands into a figure not unlike the ordinary ancient representation of an anchor, the bow merging into a border which extends along the edge of the flag at its sides and head. Another difference is that the supposed emblematic circle is placed in the centre of the cross at the intersection. In Ireland, as upon the Continent, pellets, circles, or other figures of

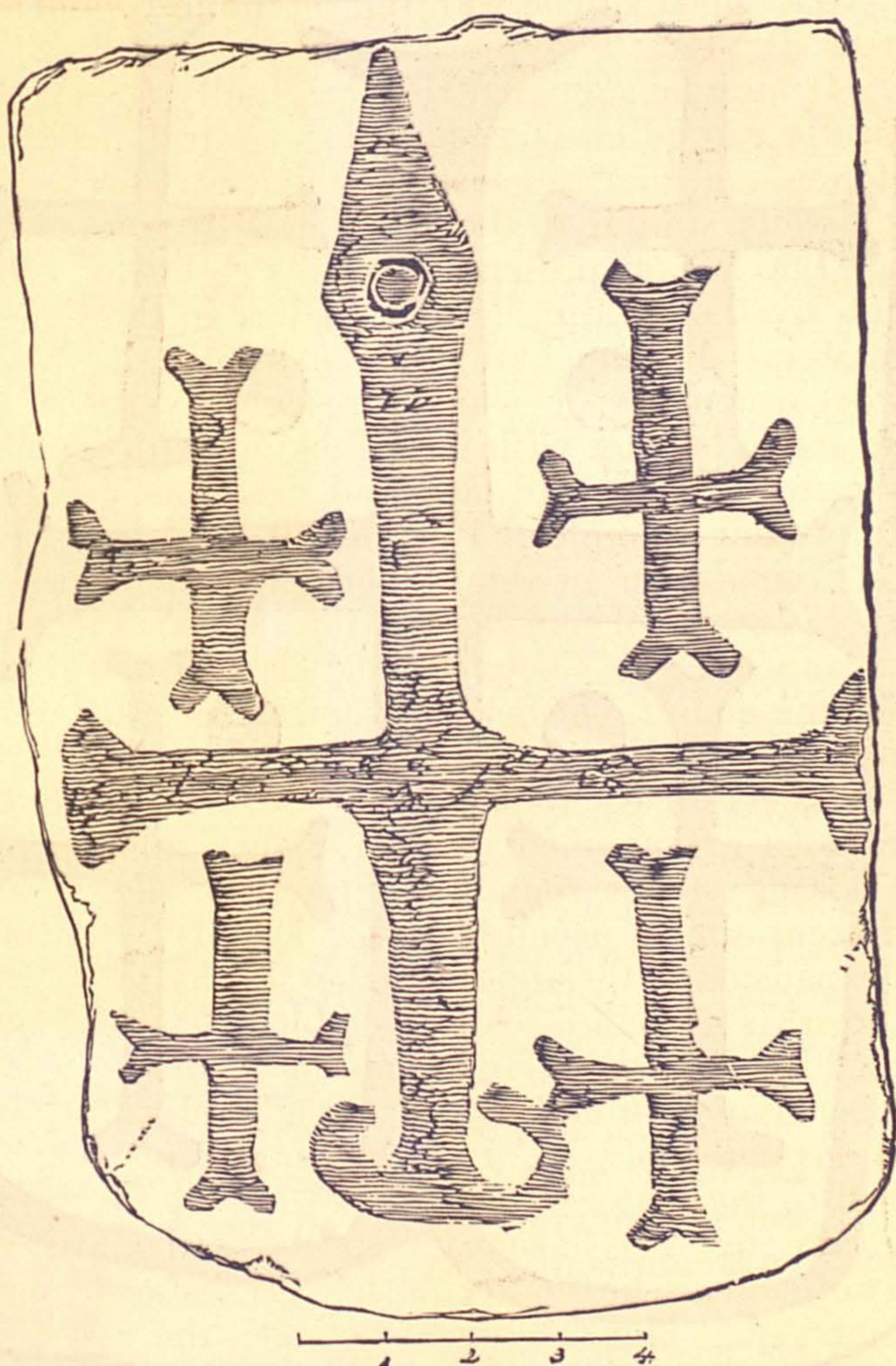


Fig. 48.—Monumental Stone in Cemetery of the Men, exhibiting Five Crosses.

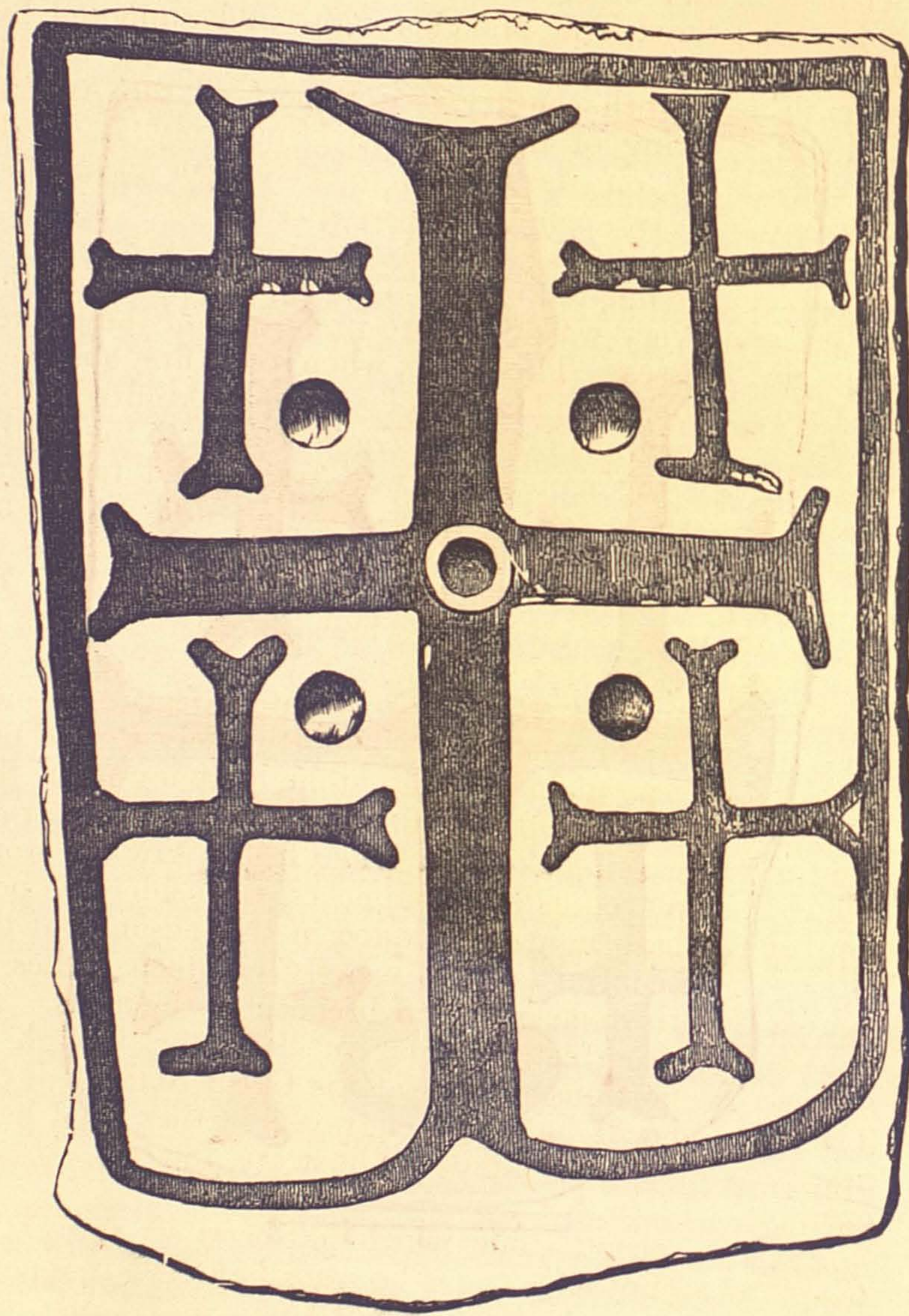


Fig. 49.—A second Monumental Stone in the Cemetery of the Men, exhibiting Five Crosses. Length, 2 feet; breadth, 15 inches.

small size, are frequently found within the quadrants of sepulchral and other crosses. A Merovingian coin of gold, discovered near Maryborough, and supposed by Mr. Madden, of the British Museum, to belong to the seventh or eighth century (see Report of the Annual General Meeting of the R.H.A.A.I. on July 7, 1863, p. 245), bears on its reverse a cross with graduated base—in *field*, two pellets and two quatrefoils.

Rising from *Cloca-breaca* are two pillars of the usual Christian monumental class. The upper portion of the larger, and every way the more important of these, presents five crosses. This stone, when it was first observed by Colonel Cooper and myself, lay amongst kindred relics in the cemetery not far from *Teach Molaise*, to the southwest. Why the monument was transferred to *Cloca-breaca*, and there set up, is a question difficult to be answered. In its present position the stone is completely out of its proper place, wherever that may have been. In connexion with the altar over which it now stands, and to which its presence, no doubt, adds a considerable amount of picturesque effect, this waif constitutes a feature at once incongruous and misleading. Unfortunately we did not take the measurements of the stone as it lay upon the ground—Colonel Cooper confining his attention to a rubbing of the carving only! When I next saw the stone it had been placed as it now appears, a considerable portion of the base being imbedded in the masonry of the altar. The central cross is exactly eighteen inches in height, and thirteen inches in breadth at the arms. As a monument perfectly similar in character, though of grander proportions, occurs at the Great Station of the Trinity, and will be found engraved further on, I have not thought it necessary to illustrate the *Cloca-breaca* example.

Of the second stone which has been set upright in *Cloca-breaca*, not more need be said than that it appears to have been part of a pillar of rude construction and inconsiderable size. It is much weather worn: so much so that it seems difficult to determine whether it had been carved or otherwise. The monument, in all probability, marked the last resting-place of some early member of the

island "family." In its original position it was, as may be presumed, an object of some interest; on the altar it is meaningless and delusive, adding, nevertheless, like its fellow, to the picturesqueness of that quaint and most remarkable pile.

Scattered amongst the stones and pebbles of various character and sizes, with which the surface of *Cloca-breaca* is overstrewn, may be noticed two which had evidently formed portions of one highly-decorated and elaborately-wrought monument. These I fitted together, and the result is shown in the accompanying etching.



Fig. 50.—On *Cloca-breaca*. Height of Stone, 2 feet; diameter of circle, 15 inches.

The thin lines indicate a part of the work which is unhappily missing, but which there is every reason to believe may still be found. The device was a central cross of a style usually called Irish, displaying within its broadly-curved arms and head, triquetra patterns, produced by the lowering of the face of the stone immediately surrounding them, the whole being encompassed

by a circular nimbus containing a fretwork design of a kind generally considered characteristic of Greek or Etruscan art, but which is not uncommon in later Roman tessellated pavements, or even in some of the more richly-carved remains of various classes which have been noticed by travellers in widely separated districts of the old as well as of the so-called "new" world. Another monument of this curious class, remaining in a fairly perfect state of preservation, may be observed directly in front of *Teach Molaise*. A third example—in which the vertical member of the cross is connected by a straight scoring extending below it with a *croix gammée*, or swastika inscribed in a square, and having beneath it a second figure of the same mysterious kind, but with curved, instead of the ordinary rectangular lines—was discovered some years ago at Glencar, county of Kerry, by the Right Rev. Charles Graves, Bishop of Limerick, and has been described by that accomplished antiquary in the *Transactions* of the Royal Irish Academy for April, 1879. These stones are, as far as I am aware, the only remains of their kind—exhibiting a cross enclosed by a circular, decorated nimbus—hitherto found in Ireland.

De Rosse has shown that the *croix gammée*, as a Christian symbol, shows itself in Roman cemeteries at the end of the third century, and holds its place on monuments of the fourth. "Its use in Ireland," writes Bishop Graves, "would doubtless have begun somewhat later, and as so few instances have been found of its occurrence, it seems probable that it did not prevail for any length of time. Thus, if its date was tolerably well established, it might be useful in determining, approximately, the age of monuments or manuscripts. And again, as it has been found in connexion with an inscription in the ogam character, the date of which has been assigned to the commencement of the seventh century, we possess one indication as to the period during which it was employed in Ireland." It is therefore most interesting to find that on Irish monuments it is seen in connexion with the nimbus, as a very high degree of antiquity for the latter, and for the cross which is so enclosed, is thus clearly indicated.

There seems reason to believe that of late it has been too much the habit of writers to refer certain interlacing patterns, spirals, and a variety of other figures which appear sculptured upon Irish sepulchral monuments, to the ninth and three following centuries, or thereabouts. The great majority of such designs, if not all, which our Christian lapidary remains exhibit, are to be found

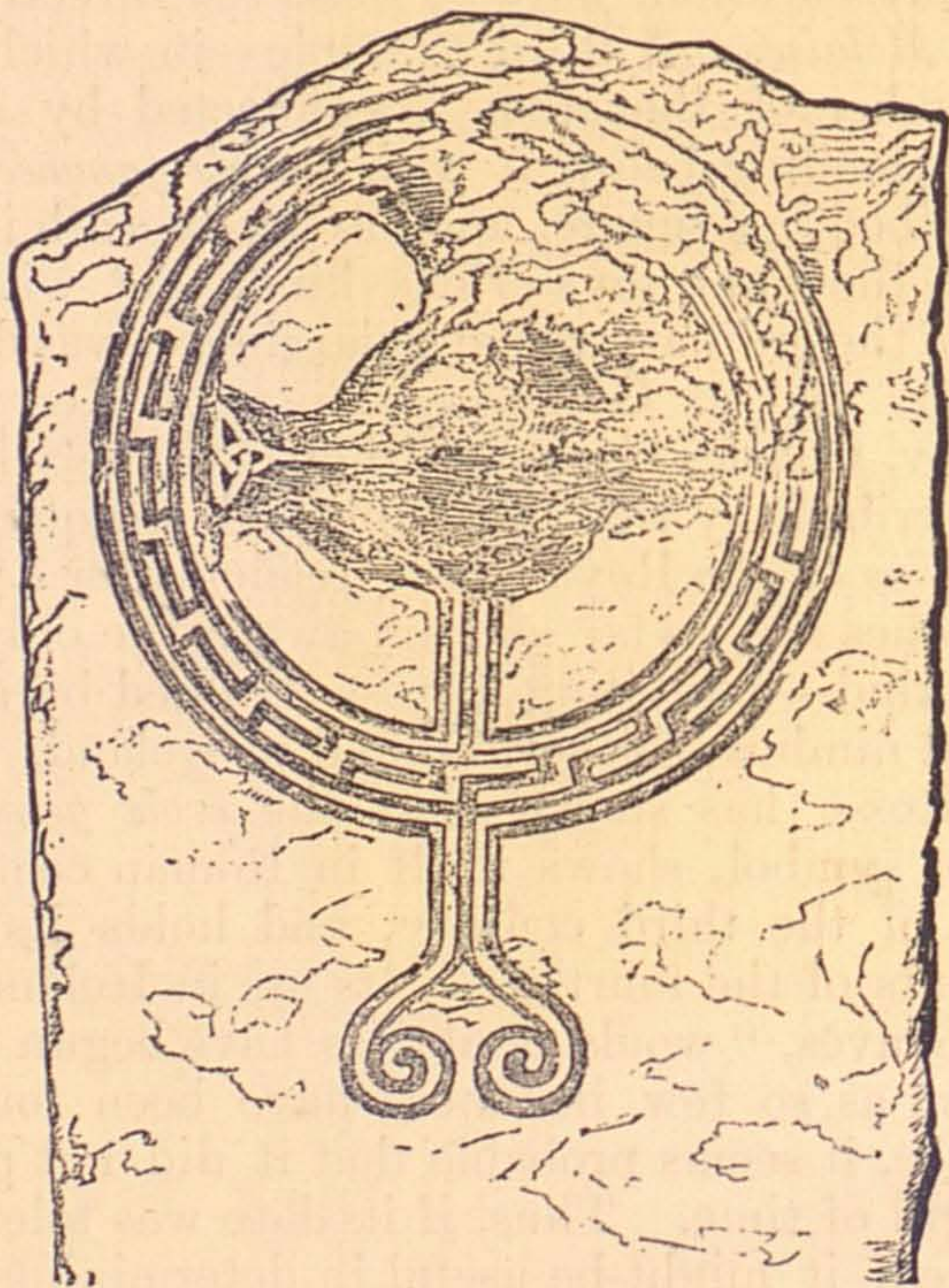
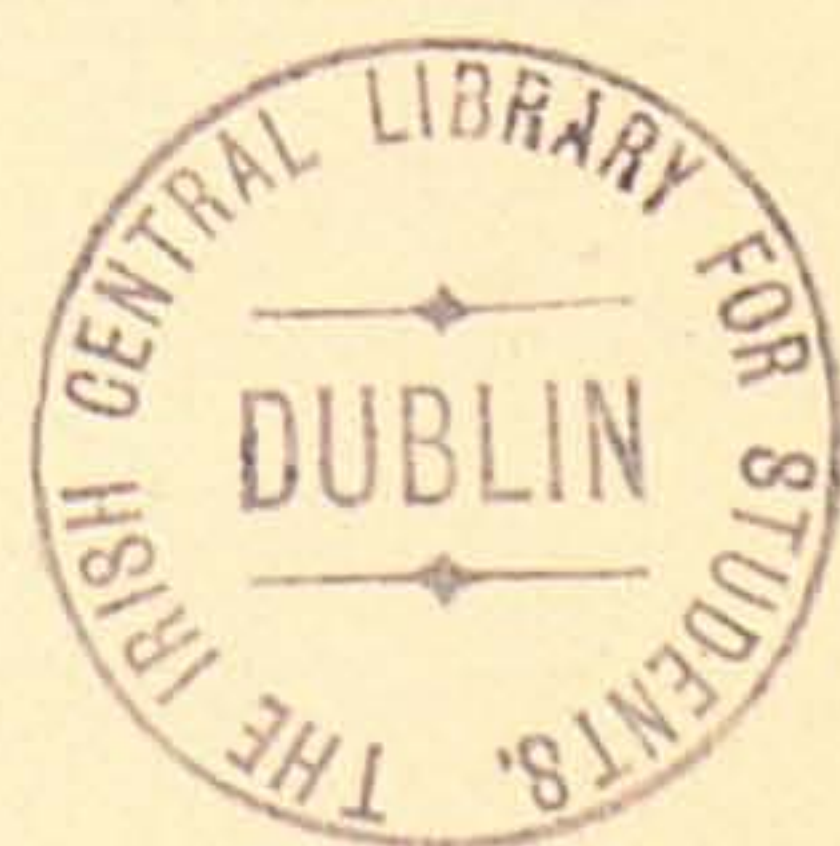


Fig. 51.—Stone with Cross and Nimbus facing Doorway of *Teach Molaise*. Present height of Stone, 5 feet 7 inches.

equally well developed in Irish manuscripts of the sixth or seventh century, or early part of the eighth. Surely our early artists or scribes would not devote their wealth of genius to the illumination of parchment, or the chasing of metal, only?

The diameter of nimbus of cross facing *Teach Molaise* is two feet (fig. 51). In considering the relative ages of



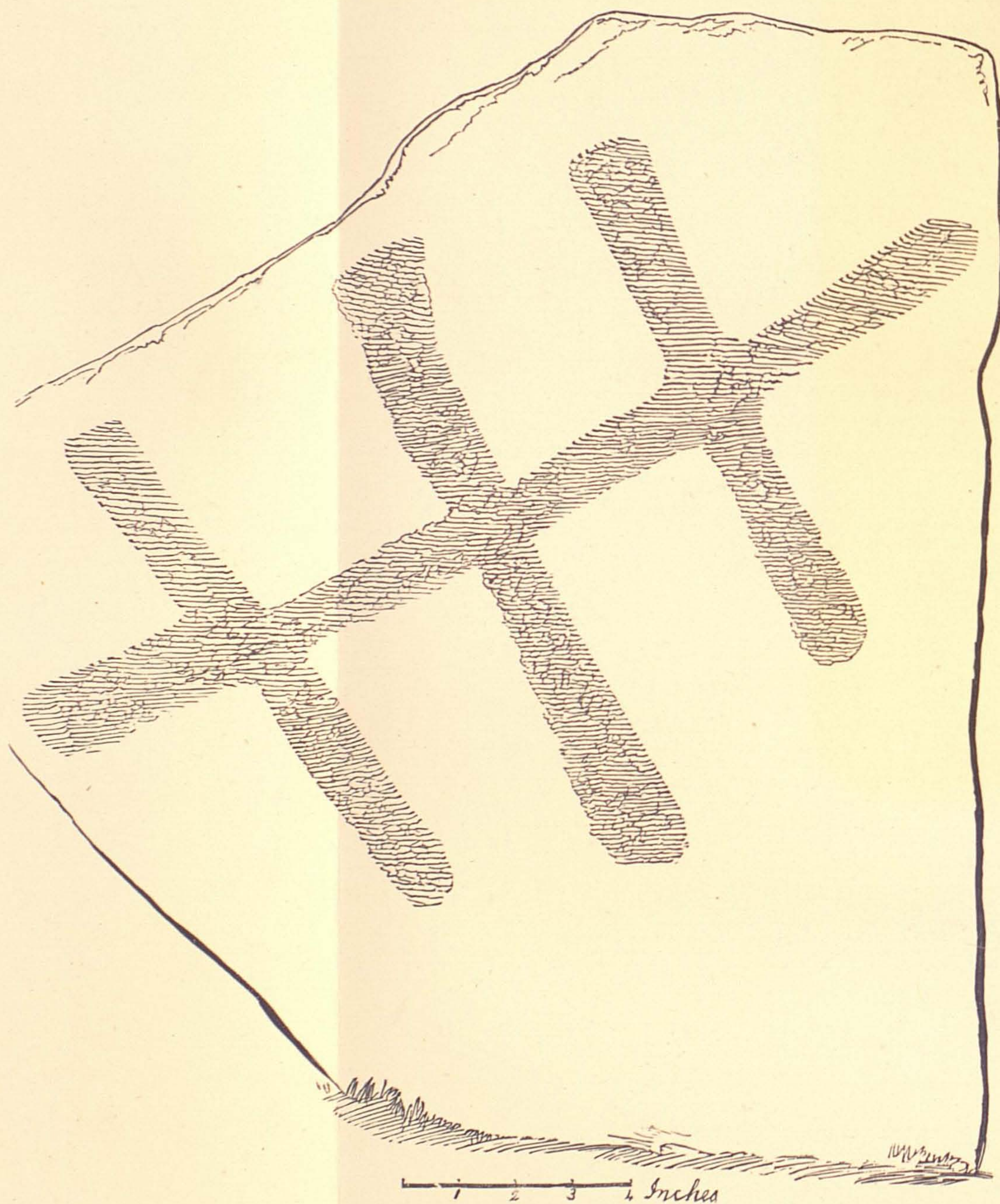


Fig. 52.—Slab with Triple Cross, in Cemetery of the Men.

Christian sepulchral monuments found in Ireland, it is not in the least necessary to assume that slabs or pillar-stones bearing rude and roughly engraved emblems or inscriptions are therefore necessarily to be regarded as more ancient than others less *bizarre* in character. Hitherto in this section I have confined my remarks to Inismurray memorial stones which, in their carvings, bear internal evidence of extremely high antiquity. My present example (fig. 52) of a cross-design is probably very old, but not necessarily more ancient than several which have already been brought forward. It consists of a line nineteen inches in length, divided at intervals nearly equal, by three others about twelve inches long, and laid more or less at right angles across it. The carving is extremely rude, and but faintly sunk; and the design would seem to have been placed obliquely upon the stone. It is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the fact of the cross arms being represented three in number. That the Trinity may be here symbolized is improbable, as slabs bearing a vertical stem, or shaft, crossed by a number of horizontal lines other than three, are to be found in various parts of the country. At St. Kieran's Monastery, on the Great Island of Aran, county Galway, is a rough pillar-stone bearing a double cross. At Glendalough, county Wicklow, and on Devenish Island, Lough Erne, are also double figures of this kind most beautifully and elaborately designed. The latter is supposed to have marked the grave of St. Molaise, of Devenish, who was but a namesake of the patron of Inismurray. Mr. Patterson of Belfast, in the *Journal R.H.A.A.I.* for January, 1883, has given an illustration of a four-armed-cross slab, or pillar, remaining at Maghera, county Down. With it are found several extremely early crosses of Greek or Latin type, carved upon stones almost as unfashioned by art as are boulders. The four-armed example is described by Mr. Patterson as standing three feet above ground, and measuring sixteen inches wide. It appears, he says, to be very ancient; the lines are shallow, and rudely cut, as though with very imperfect tools.

Upon what appears the artificially smoothed face of an otherwise rough sandstone flag, of irregular form,

lying between *Teach Molaise* and *Teampull-na-Bhfear*, is carved a cross, the details of which are of extremely rare occurrence in works of Irish monumental design. The cross (fig. 53) may be described as consisting of a horizontal scoring, broad, flat, and shallow, with an upper and a lower member of about the same breadth, extending at right angles from, but not touching, it. Though the arms are scarcely quite so long as are the vertical limbs, the figure, which is enclosed by a continuous sunken border, may be classed as of the Greek order. Within the quadrants where pellets or small cups usually occur, are four circlets similar in every respect to rings which we sometimes find punched, or engraved upon pre-historic remains, or even among archaic scorings on earth-fast rocks. Decoration, or very likely symbolism, or a combination of both, of which the key has long been lost, appears not unfrequently upon our most ancient monumental stones and pillars. I speak now only of such as belong to a date later than that of St. Patrick. In some of the primitive churchyards in the county Dublin, as at Rathmichael, Tullagh, and Dalkey, for instance, slabs or pillars which are evidently monuments of Christian times, present a series of concentric circles, some of which contain a central cup or dot. Perhaps the most notable relic of this kind remaining in Erin occurs in the county Sligo, at St. Brigid's Well, close to the village of Cliffony, at a distance, "as the crow flies," of but a few miles from Inismurray. It consists of a block of hard, reddish sandstone, two feet eleven inches long by ten inches in breadth, and about five inches in thickness. The stone is just of the kind upon which an ogam inscription might be looked for. The carving which it bears, taken as a whole, presents the appearance of an early Christian cross, but, upon dissection, all its parts, or details savour of a pagan origin. In the first place, it exhibits a swastica, exactly as found on Roman altars in Britain; secondly, in the centre are three concentric circles, while in the arms and shaft will be recognized a kind of lozenge design very common amongst our prehistoric scorings. I have here made a digression in order to illustrate an opinion which I have long

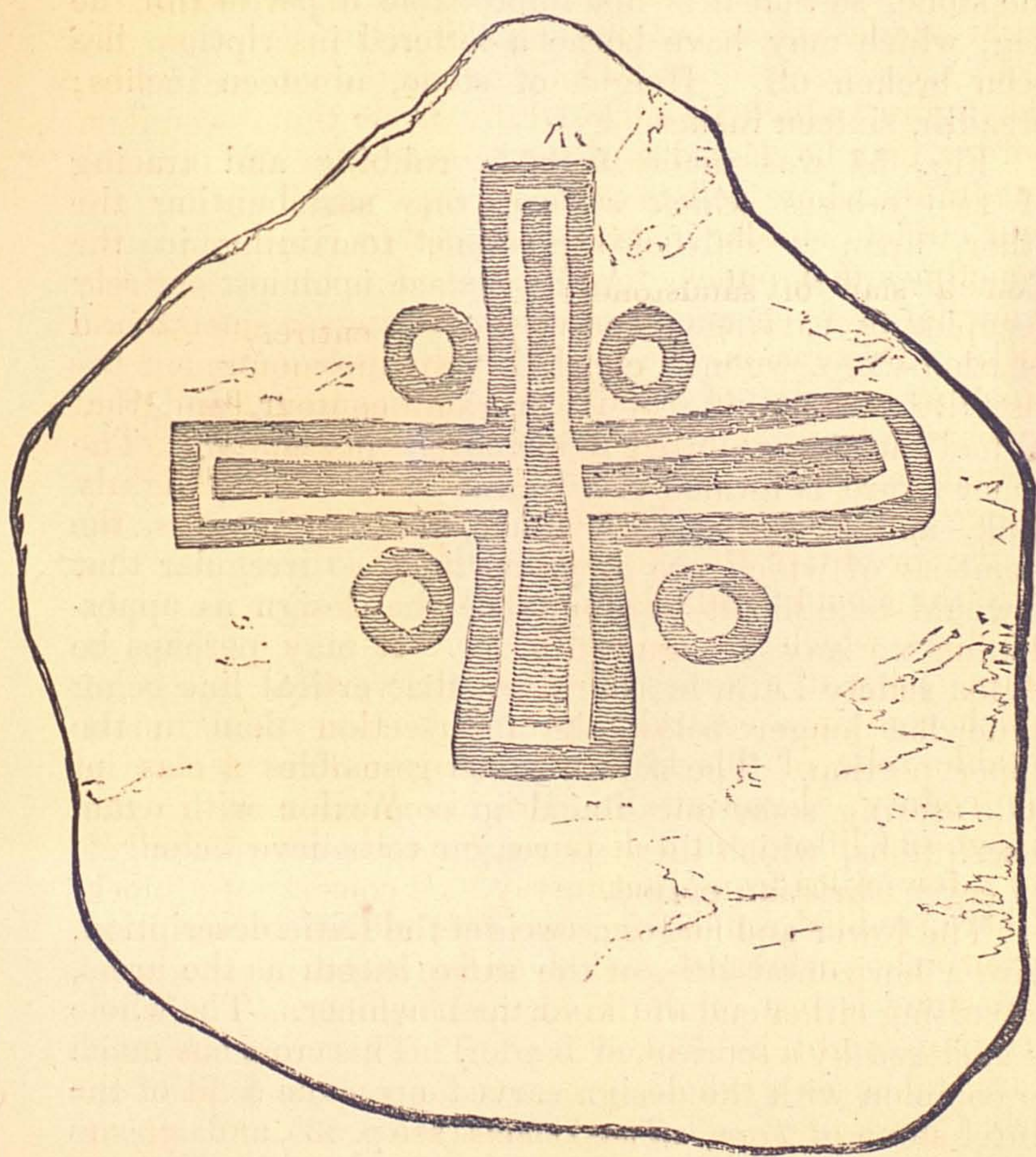


Fig. 53.—Monumental Stone in Cemetery of the Men. Height, 19 inches; breadth, 16 inches.

entertained, that whenever circles accompanied by a cross are found upon an Irish *leac*, the monument must be referred to an early period of the Christian Church. The example under notice exhibits all the appearance of extreme age. The cross is not nearly in the centre of the stone, so that it is not improbable a portion of the flag, which may have borne a lettered inscription, has been broken off. Height of stone, nineteen inches; breadth, sixteen inches.

Fig. 54 was made from a rubbing and tracing of two crosses which appear, one surmounting the other, upon a slab of sandstone, remaining in the Cemetery of the Men. As its surface is almost entirely occupied by carvings; and as the edges are smooth and weather-worn, we may conclude that the monument has lost little or nothing of its original contour, and that it had never exhibited a memorial inscription. The upper figure is formed of two rudely cut lines, slightly sunk, and bisecting each other, forming a cross, the members of which are of proportions so irregular that it would be difficult to pronounce the design as appertaining to any recognized order. It may perhaps be styled rudely Latin in character, the vertical line being somewhat longer below the intersection than in the upper portion. The figure much resembles a class of rude scoring sometimes found in connexion with ogam inscriptions, which there is reason to believe belong to an early Christian period.

The lower and larger cross is of the Latin description, with a horizontal line, of the same length as the arms, traversing either end of the vertical member. The whole is enclosed by a scoring, or border. This cross has much in common with the design carved upon the soffit of the lintel stone of *Teampull-na-Teinidh* (see p. 53), and appears to be of high antiquity. The latter (as has already been intimated), though now forming the head of a doorway, probably not older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century, is in all likelihood a relic of some much more ancient church portal. At any rate it cannot be supposed to have originally belonged to the structure in which it is found; and if not the head of an older doorway, may

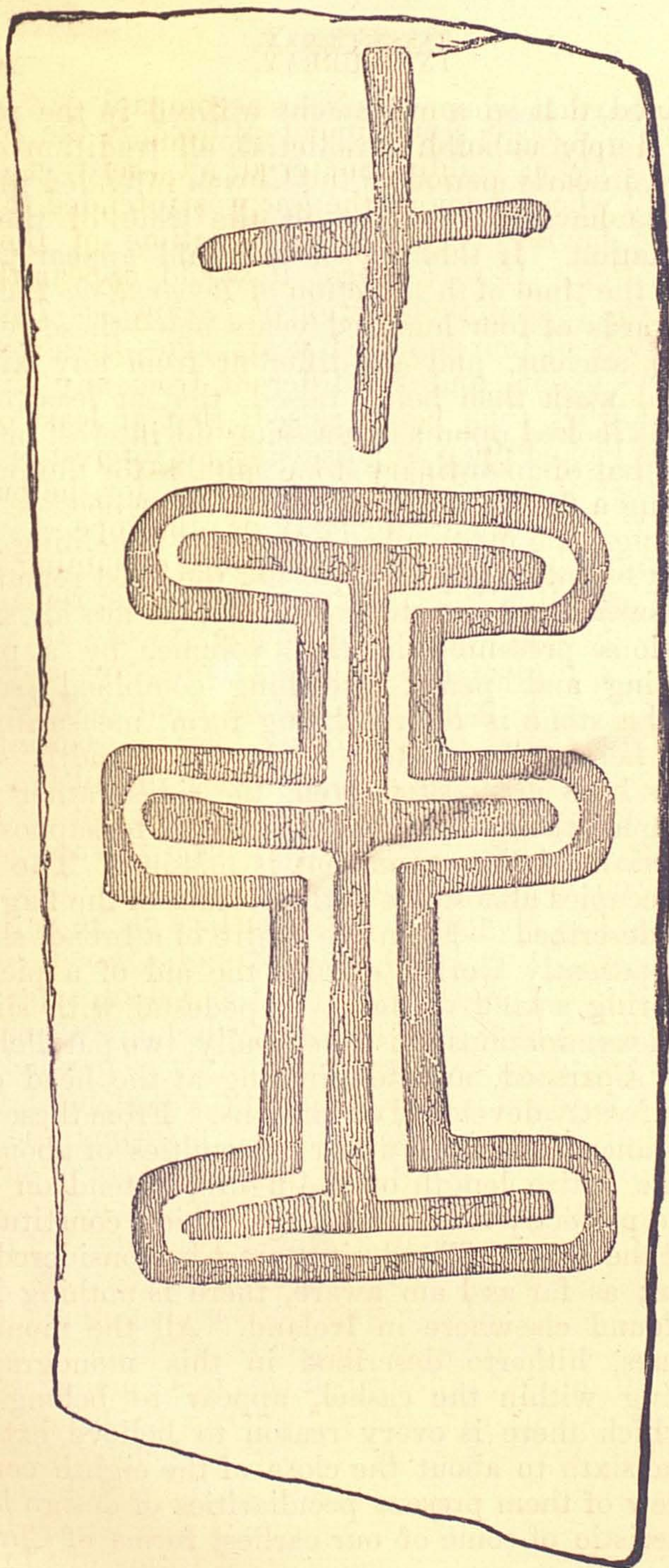


Fig. 54.—Monumental Stone with two Crosses in Cemetery of the Men. Length, 2 feet 6 inches; breadth, 1 foot.

possibly have been a monument utilized in the present edifice merely as building material, all tradition of the individual whose memory the *leac* was intended to commemorate having been lost at the time of the new appropriation. If this be so, it would appear that as early as the time of the erection of *Teampull-na-Teinidh*—say upwards of four hundred years ago—these remains were so ancient, and so different from any kind of memorial work then being raised, that at least one of them was looked upon as possessing no interest or value beyond that of an ordinary stone suitable for the purpose of topping a flat-headed doorway or other ope.

Amongst the many memorial-stones remaining in the cemetery, so often referred to, not the least remarkable is the subject of an etching, made, as are all similar illustrations presented in this volume, by a process of rubbing and pencil sketching combined (see fig. 55). The stone is of an oblong form, measuring two feet in height, by sixteen inches in breadth. The top and base are pretty even, the sides rather rough and jagged, though there is no reason to suppose that any portion of the monument is missing. The cross, which occupies almost the entire surface of the flag, may be thus described:—From the centre of a broad, shallow line—apparently worked out by the aid of a pick and representing a kind of stand, or pedestal with slightly enlarged terminations—rise, vertically, two parallel lines, slightly separated, and terminating at the head of the stone in faintly developed expansions. From these lines, at a distance from their upper extremities of about one-third the entire length of the figure, extend on either side two perfectly similar scorings, which constitute the arms of the cross. The design must be considered very singular; as far as I am aware, there is nothing like it to be found elsewhere in Ireland. All the monumental stones, hitherto described in this monograph as remaining within the cashel, appear to belong to a time which there is every reason to believe extended from the sixth to about the close of the eighth century. Not a few of them present peculiarities of design highly characteristic of some of our earliest forms of Christian

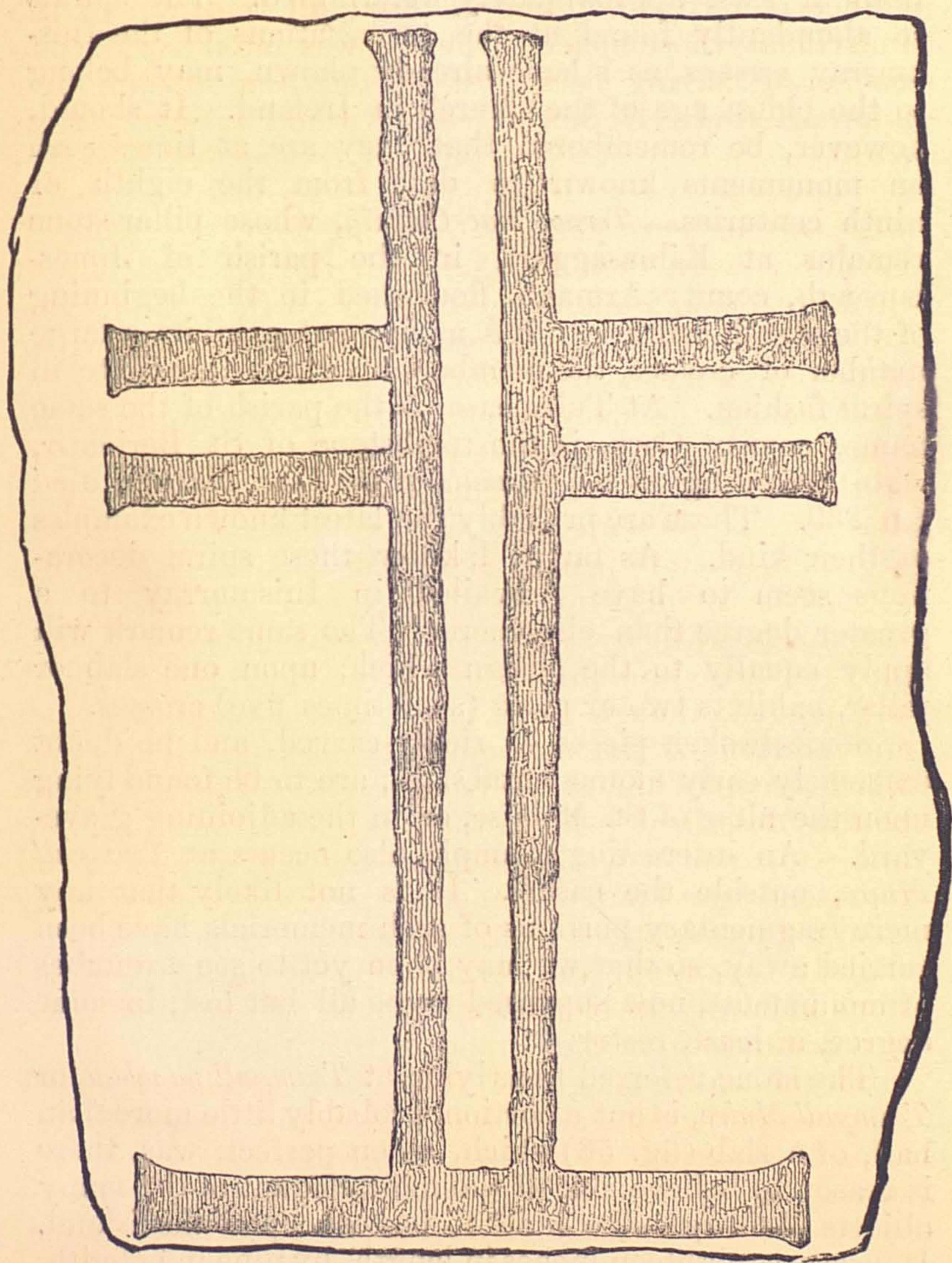


Fig. 55.—Sepulchral Stone in the Cemetery of the Men. Length, 2 feet; breadth, 16 inches.

art as exhibited on remains, the date of which has been at least approximately determined. The spirals so abundantly found at the terminations of the Inismurray crosses, as I have already shown, may belong to the oldest age of the Church in Ireland. It should, however, be remembered that they are at times seen on monuments known to date from the eighth or ninth centuries. *Ternoc mac-Ciarain*, whose pillar-stone remains at Kilnasaggart, in the parish of Jonesborough, county Armagh, flourished in the beginning of the eighth century. His monument exhibits a large number of crosses, the members of which terminate in spiral fashion. At Tullylease, in the parish of the same name, county Cork, is the tombstone of St. Berichtir, who, according to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, died A.D. 839. These are probably the latest known examples of their kind. As far as I know, these spiral decorations seem to have prevailed in Inismurray to a greater degree than elsewhere. The same remark will apply equally to the design which, upon one slab or pillar, exhibits two or more (sometimes five) crosses.

Some broken pieces of richly-carved, and no doubt extremely early monumental slabs, are to be found lying upon the altar of St. Molaise, or in the adjoining graveyard. An interesting example also occurs at *Teampull Muire*, outside the cashel. It is not likely that any mere fragmentary portions of such memorials have been carried away, so that we may hope yet to see a number of monuments, now supposed to be all but lost, in some degree, at least, restored.

The stone referred to as lying at *Teampull na mban*, or *Teampull Muire*, is but a portion, probably little more than half, of a slab (fig. 56) which, when perfect, was, there is reason to believe, one of the most elegant of the many objects of its peculiar kind to be seen upon the island. It measures eighteen inches in length, by nine in breadth. Upon it is incised a figure which is evidently the lower portion of a cross. Archæologists will deplore that the upper members of the figure have been lost, as no doubt their terminations more or less coincided with the divergent spirals and graceful curves which constitute the

design of the base. Besides, it is not in the least unlikely that at the intersection an interesting example of so-called "Celtic" tracing may have been exhibited, to say nothing of the probability of the name of some distinguished cleric or chieftain having been carved on the missing part of the *leac*.

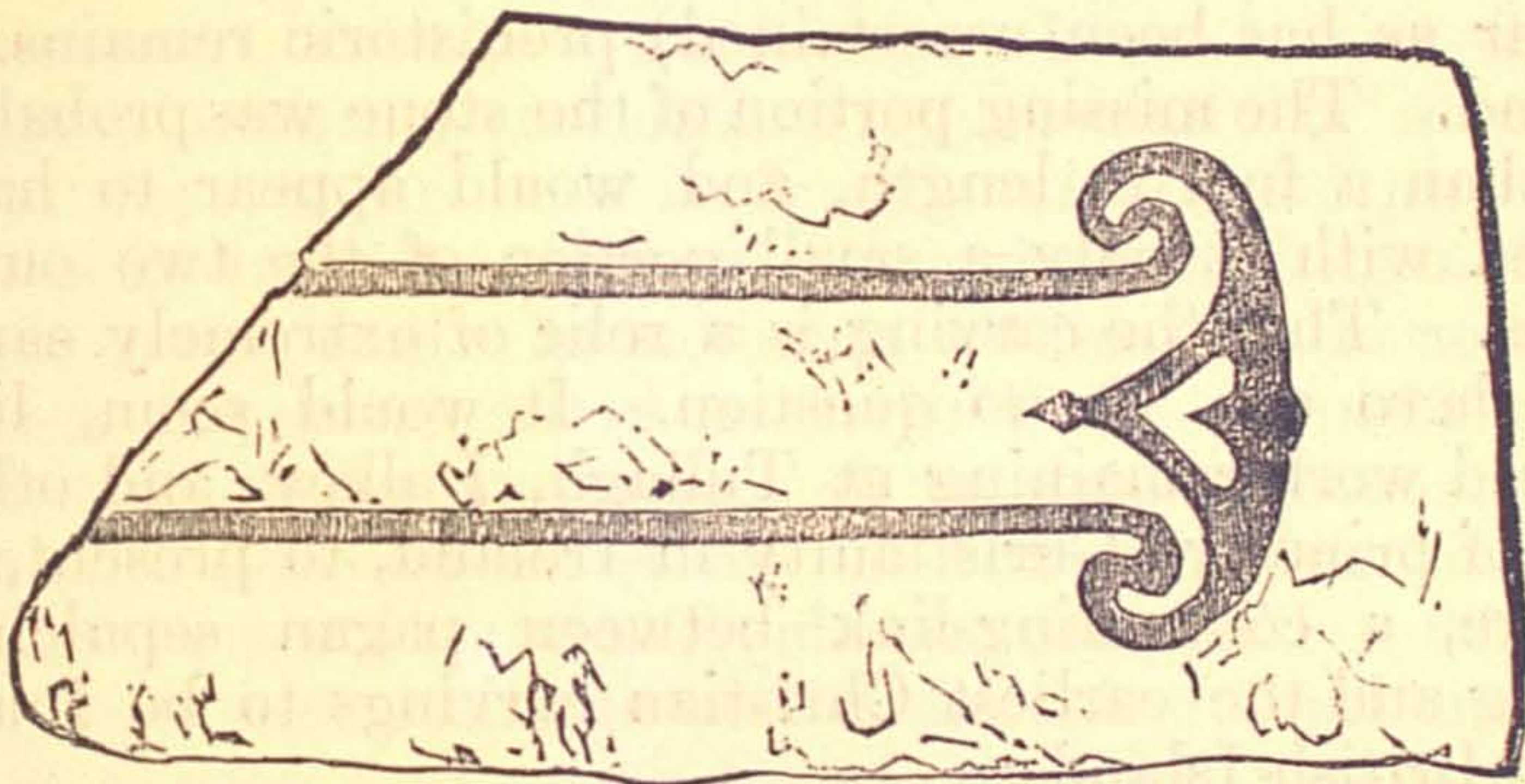


Fig. 56.—Fragment of Monumental Slab at *Teampull-na-mban*, or *Teampull Muire*.
Length, 18 inches.

A stone which may be seen on the altar of *Teach Molaise* (fig. 57) merits especial attention on the part of such antiquaries as make the subject of primitive symbolism

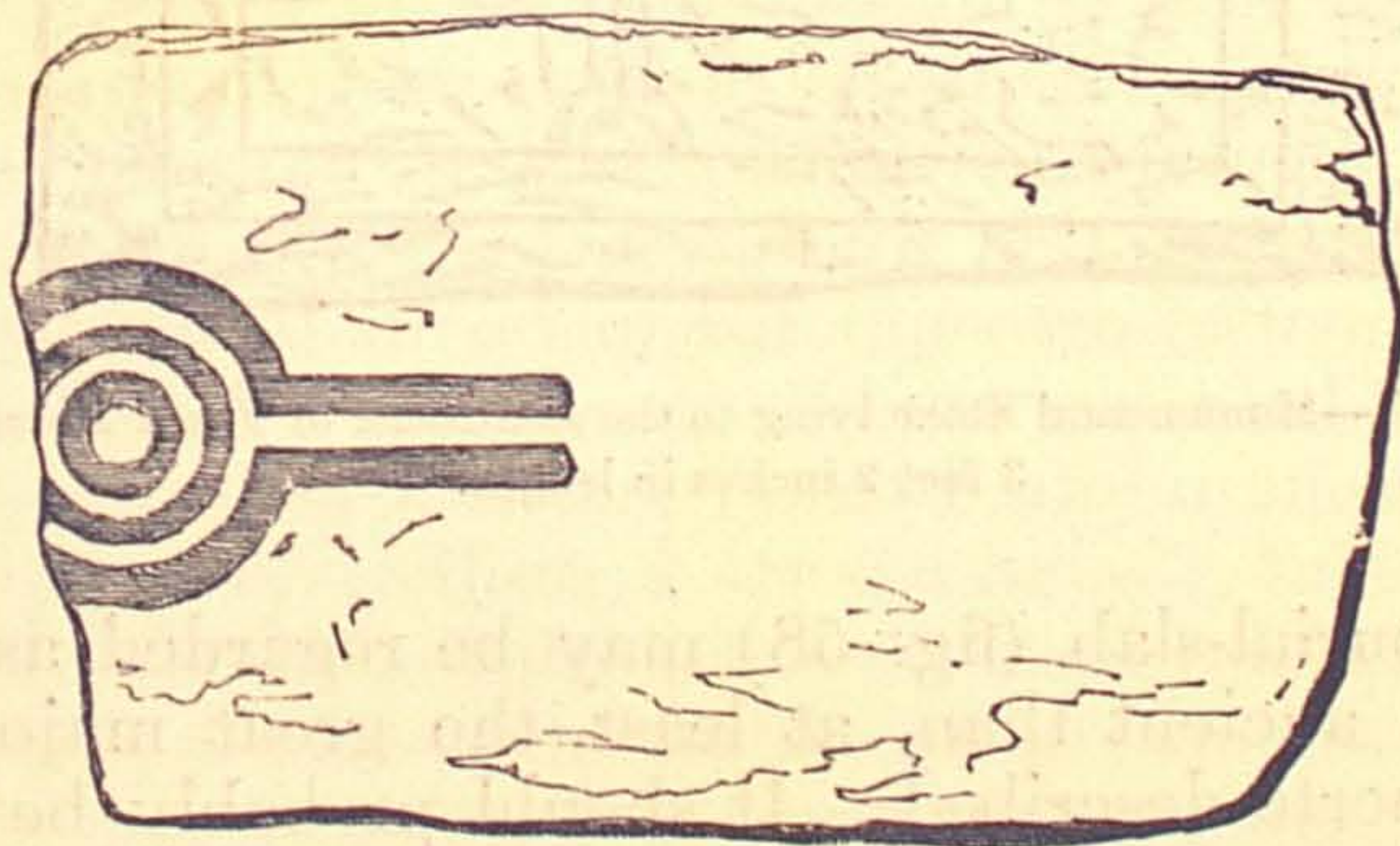


Fig. 57.—Fragment of Monumental Slab on the Altar of *Teach Molaise*.
Length, 11 inches.

their study. Like the example just figured, this relic is but a fragment. It would seem, however, to retain nearly the entire of the device with which it was originally

carved. This may be described as consisting of three concentric scorings, of which two are complete circles, the third, and outermost, being penannular, with parallel offsets from the opening extending lengthways on the stone to a distance of about two inches. This is exactly the style of design which appears upon many "earth-fast" rocks, *dallans*, and on the walls of (as far as has been ascertained) prehistoric remains in Ireland. The missing portion of the stone was probably less than a foot in length, and would appear to have carried with it only a small portion of the two outer circles. That the carving is a relic of extremely early date there can be no question. It would seem, like kindred work remaining at Tullagh, Dalkey, and other sites of primitive Christianity in Ireland, to present, as it were, a connecting-link between pagan sepulchral scoring and the earliest Christian carvings to be found in the British Islands.

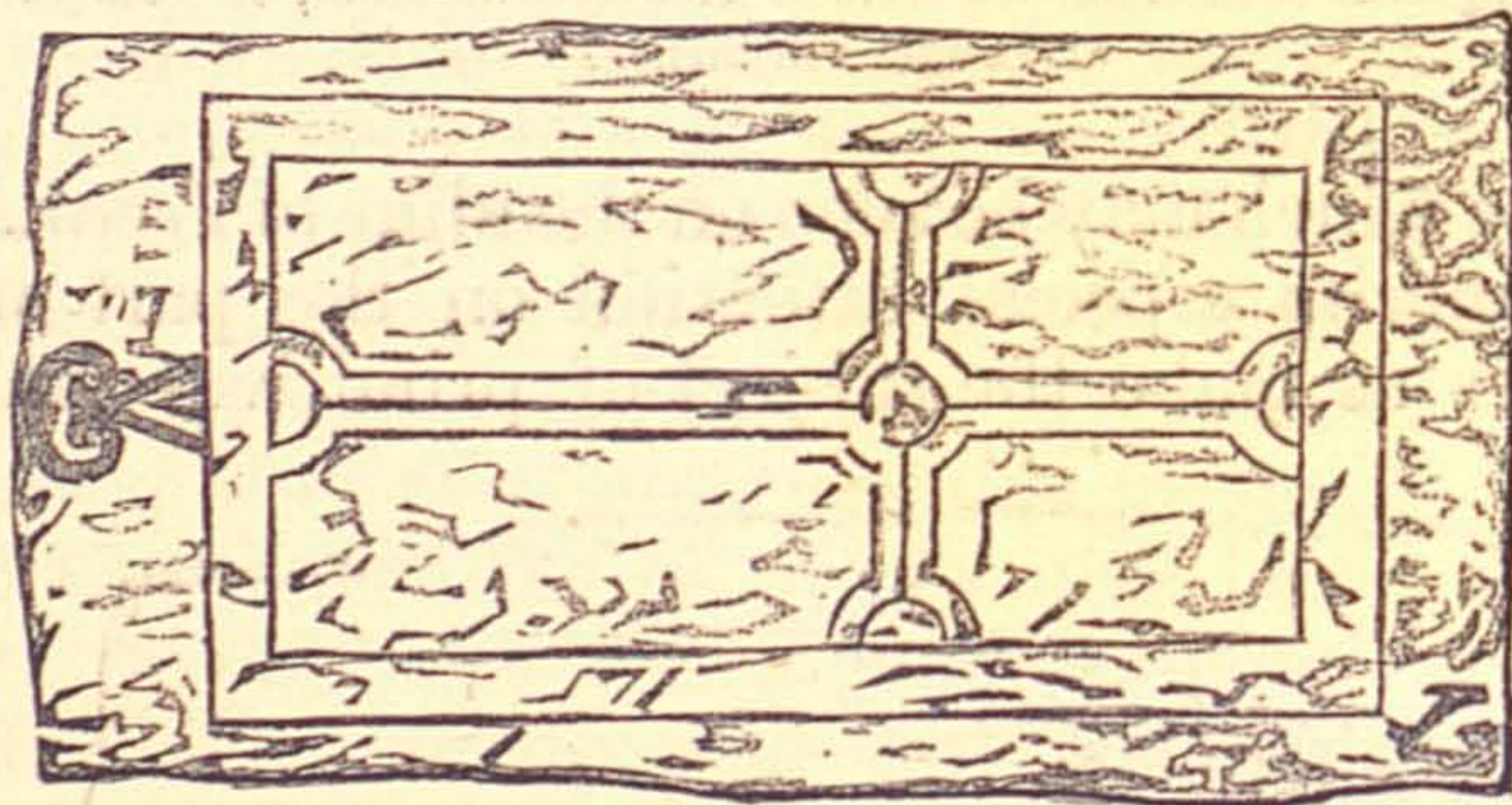


Fig. 58.—Monumental Stone lying to the south-east of *Teach Molaise*.
3 feet 2 inches in length.

The burial-slab (fig. 58) may be regarded as somewhat less ancient than, at least, the great majority of those hitherto described. It should probably be looked upon as immediately following the primitive Christian monuments remaining upon Inismurray, and others of like character which not unfrequently occur in early Irish cemeteries, as at Mainister, Aran Mor, *Ardoiléan*, off the coast of Connemara, and elsewhere. It bears no lettered inscription. Perhaps the reputation of the individual

over whom it had been placed was so great that of old an epitaph was considered unnecessary. The "family" may have thought that the flag would ever be pointed to as covering the grave of a beloved and well-remembered brother. Indeed, it is worthy of remark that all the inscriptions remaining upon the island are found on small unpretending-looking stones, while the larger monuments, though often bearing beautifully-designed crosses, are otherwise uninscribed. The flag measures three feet two inches in length, and one foot eleven inches in breadth. The cross which it exhibits is in the Latin style, with a small circle at the intersection, and semicircles, averaging four inches in width at the extremities of its members. This is a very usual Irish fashion. The figure is enclosed by a border formed of two incised lines, which may be described as running roughly parallel to each other, the space between them varying from four and a-half to two and three-quarter inches. From the base of this border, in line with the shaft of the cross, a very elegant pendant-like device extends to a distance of about five inches. In it may be recognized an interesting example of the divergent spiral. Whether this appendage should be considered symbolic, or merely ornamental, is a question very difficult to form an opinion upon. It may possibly be the conventional ship which, in early ages of Christianity, was adopted as an emblem of the Church. In some carvings of this class, less *bizarre*, it is evident that the work was intended to suggest the idea of a galley with mast and yard. It seems to me not improbable that we have here the ship idea very fantastically expressed. The upper lines may indicate a set square-sail, by which the mast is hidden. Pre-Raphaelite artists, even those of the best classic period—sculptors as well as painters—did not generally trouble themselves to represent objects, whether marine or otherwise, in their proper forms and proportions. The monument lies in the cemetery a little to the south-east of *Teach Molaise*.

Within the cashel, nearly adjoining the portal (designed and erected by the people of the Board of Works), a slab (fig. 59) will be observed. The stone is flat and

thin, and, as a monument, slightly imperfect: but no important portion appears to have been lost. It measures twenty-seven inches in length, by twenty-one in breadth, and bears an incised cross, of rather plain, but graceful design. It is otherwise uninscribed. The cross may belong to any period between the eighth and twelfth centuries. It exhibits no details pointing to a particular school or age; but doubtless, beneath, or close to it was laid, in a last earthly resting-place, all that was mortal of some member of the insular community.

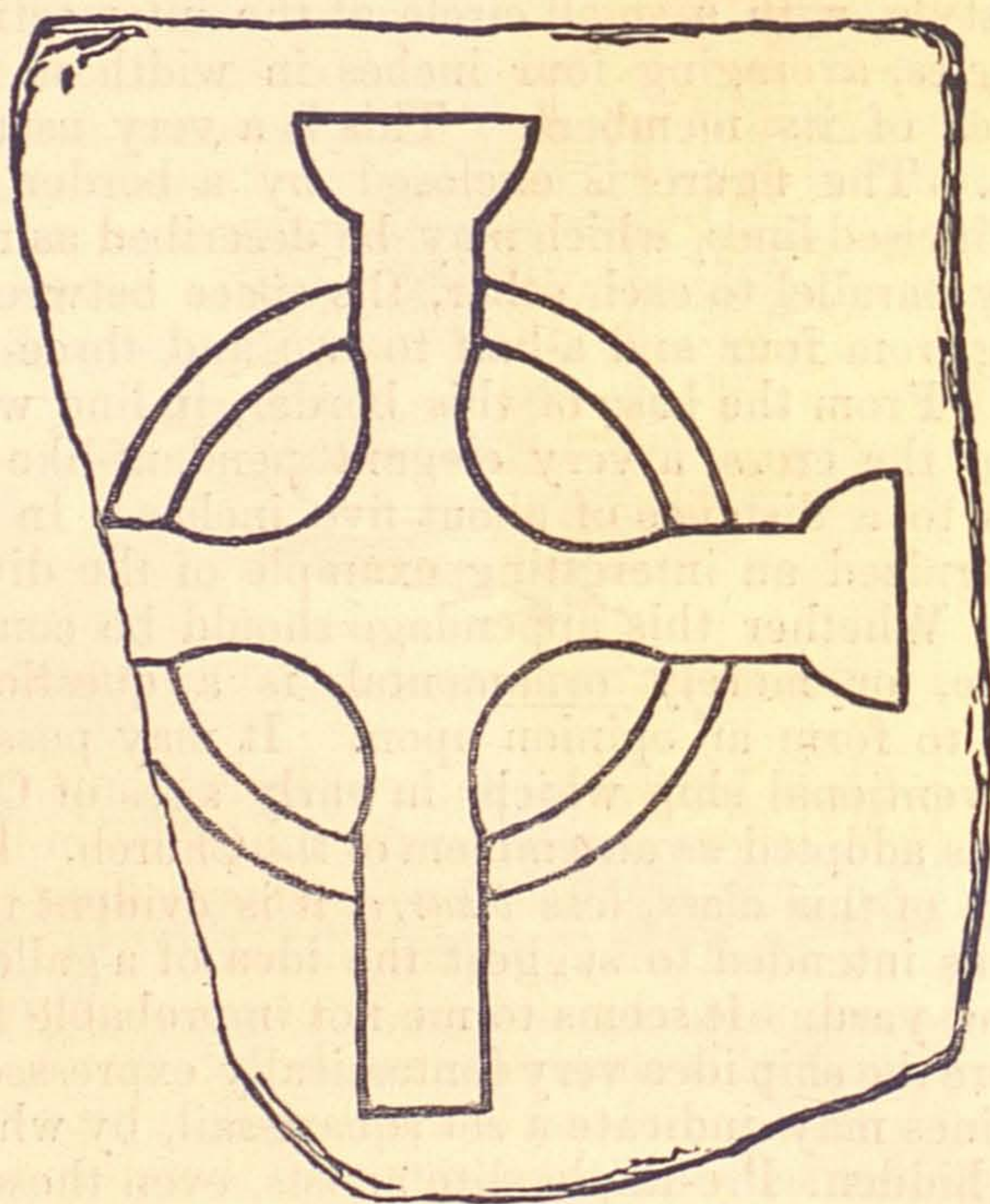


Fig. 59.—Cross-inscribed Monument near the Modern Portal of the Cashel.
Length, 27 inches; breadth, 21 inches.

A pillar-stone (fig. 60), standing close to the western gable of the "Church of the Men," is the last monument of a sepulchral or memorial class to be described as existing within the cashel. It bears an elegantly-proportioned

Latin cross rising from a horizontal bar, slightly sunken, and having a breadth similar to that of the members of the cross proper, *i.e.* of two inches or thereabouts. The stone at present rises to a height of some five feet above ground; but it stands firmly, and much of the base would appear to be imbedded in the soil. Unhappily, like other relics of the same class remaining upon the island, it seems never to have possessed lettering of any description.

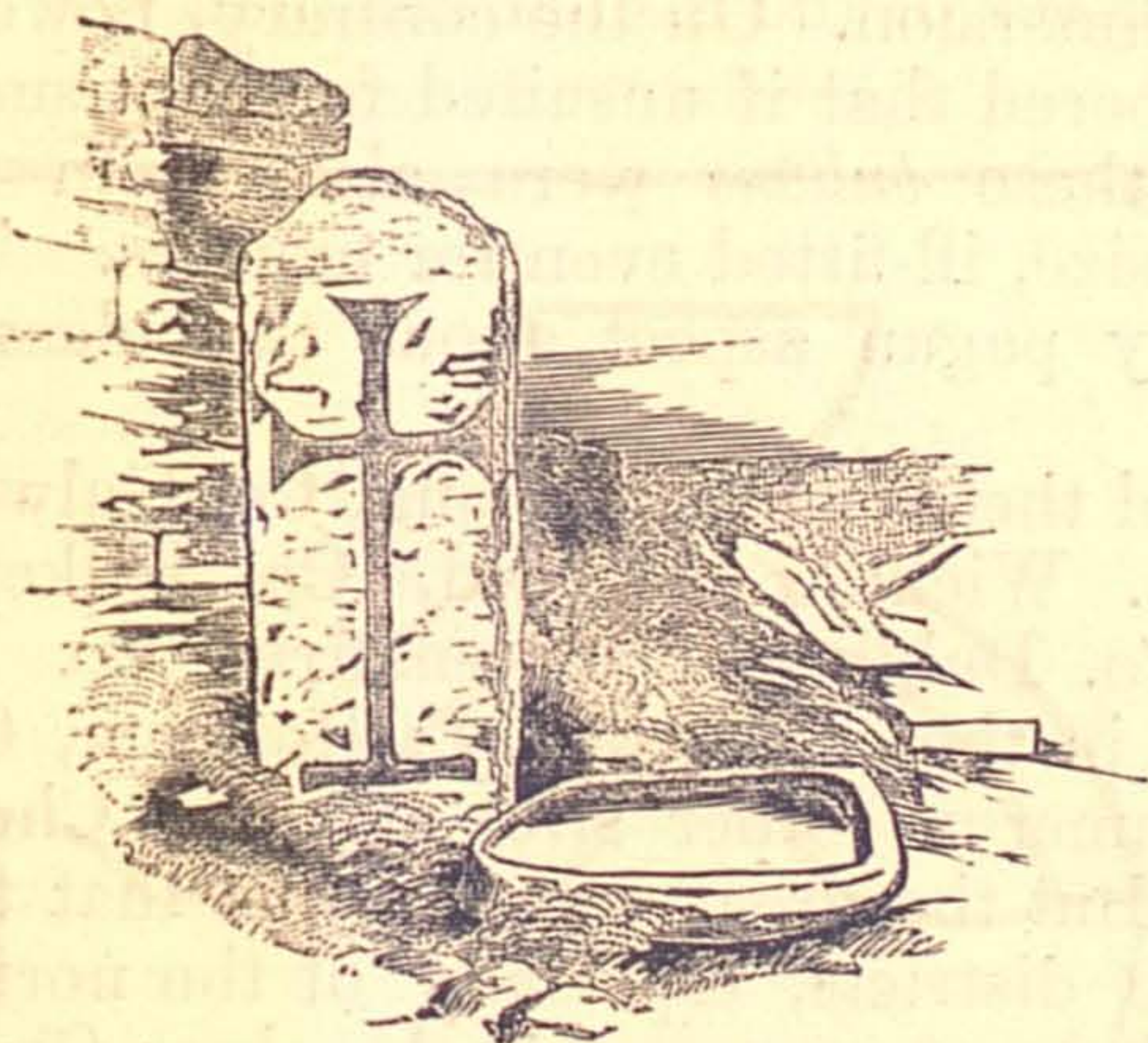


Fig. 60.—Pillar-stone and *Bullàn* standing at the Church of the Men.

The Bullàns.—In various parts of Ireland, upon rocks, boulders, and other monoliths, are found basin-like depressions, popularly called by Irish-speaking people *bullàns*, which word may be translated “little pools.” It has been supposed by not a few eminent antiquaries that remains of this curious class, being discovered in connexion with a considerable number of our most venerable ecclesiastical establishments, are therefore unquestionably of Christian origin, and were devoted to baptismal rites. On the other hand, it has been maintained (see Dr. Martin in the *Journal R. H. A. A. I.* for July, 1875, p. 438) that they were rude mortars, in which the priests, living in connexion with such churches, in a very early age after the introduction of Christianity, had ground their corn for food. The Rev. James Graves has remarked that he “felt inclined

to acknowledge that there was some probability in this view. He had no doubt that the clergy lived close to, if not within, the ancient parish churches. In many instances the arrangements for a loft, or upper room, might yet be traced at the west end of some of these ruined buildings. The stones were so extremely rude that there was a difficulty in believing them to have been used as fonts even at the earliest period of Christianity in Ireland, and the hollows certainly were too small to have served for total immersion. On the contrary, however, it must be remembered that if unsuited for baptismal purposes, many of these *bullàns* were also, from their depth and small size, ill-fitted even for mortars. There was a suspiciously pagan aspect about this class of ancient remains."

We find these *bullàns* at Cong, Co. Galway; Glendalough, Co. Wicklow; Ullard, Co. Kilkenny; Rathmichael, Co. Dublin; Templenaffrin, Co. Fermanagh; Killinagh, in the same county; Rosscam, Co. Galway, and in numerous other sites of early Christianity in Ireland. But the great fact remains that they are discovered in districts, especially of the north and west, which had never possessed a church or Christian cemetery. They are found grouped upon the face, or nearly perpendicular side, of the natural rock, upon the surface of boulders, and in the recesses of natural or artificial caverns. They may be seen on the shore of lough or river, or near the summits of lofty mountains. They are occasionally found within the chambers of pagan cairns. Examples of the largest variety occur at *Sliabh-na-caillighe*, Dowth, and Newgrange. In the last-named monument, within a somewhat shallow basin of considerable dimensions, two large cup-like artificial hollows, admirably wrought out, occur. In plan our *bullàns* are very generally circular, or nearly so; but in depth they vary considerably, some being extremely shallow and flat-bottomed, while others in section present the figure of an inverted cone acutely pointed. The great majority are simply bowl-shaped.

In a note to "Loca Patriciana," p. 281, vol. iii., 4th Series, of the *Journal R.H.A.A.I.*, will be found

an interesting reference to a stone of this class. *Mesgegra*, King of Leinster in the first century of the Christian era, is slain and decapitated by *Conal Cearnach*, the champion of Ulster. The head is laid upon a stone, "and the story records that the blood pierced the stone, and flowed through it to the ground." This relic of pagan times is said still to remain in the stream opposite the ruins of the Franciscan church, Clane. "It is a '*bullàn* stone,' and has an inverse conical cavity eighteen inches deep and as many wide on its upper surface."

The water which is almost invariably to be found in these hollows is very generally supposed by the country people to possess miraculous curative powers, especially in diseases affecting the eye. It has been explained to me, by a medical gentleman of great experience, that water thus found, being as a rule, highly acidulated by the decomposition of vegetable-matter, when applied to eyes, or rather eyelids, affected by certain forms of irritation, may, not unfrequently, alleviate discomfort, and even effect a cure. The same belief prevails in connexion with the water of many of our "holy wells."

Our first churches, there is every reason to believe, were frequently erected in the vicinity of wells which had, from time immemorial, been considered sacred. In like manner, may not the primitive *bullàn* have often suggested a site to the early church builder? If they had been designed as baptismal fonts, it is difficult to account for the appearance of nine, seven, five, four, or two bowls upon the one rock—sometimes one touching the other. From the conical, or right-angular section of some examples, and from the position of others at a considerable height from the ground, in the perpendicular face of a natural rock, the grain-rubbing, or mortar theory is, I believe, in such instances, untenable, as is also that of the basins having served as baptismal fonts.

Two remains of this most mysterious class occur on Inismurray, one close to the west gable of the "Church of the Men," the other opposite the present entrance to the "Church of the Women." The former is figured, along with the monumental stone which stands beside it, in p. 119, *ante*. The hollow is of a somewhat larger

size than usual, is extremely shallow, and of irregular shape. It measures about one foot in diameter.

The example at the "Church of the Women" consists of a very rough boulder-looking stone, one foot nine inches in length, by one foot two inches in breadth. Its bowl is ten inches in diameter, and of considerable depth. This may be looked upon as a very characteristic specimen of the ordinary single-bowled *bullàn*, found in connexion with our earliest churches. Both the stones, however, are of unusually small size. The larger examples, like those of Cong and Killinagh, near Belcoo, county Fermanagh, exhibit a number of basins. The last-named has no fewer than nine, in each of which a globular, or egg-shaped stone, like some of those found upon the altar of *Cloca breaca*, has been set. The tradition upon the spot is, that they were used for the purpose of anathematizing.

The Holy Wells on Inismurray.—Mr. Campbell, in his Introduction to Grant's *Central Provinces of India*, p. 19, after referring to the volume and variety of folk-lore current amongst the natives of the Sagór and Narbada territories—legends of warlike feats, sorcery, witchcraft, supernatural influences, worn-out religious beliefs, &c.—observes: "It would be endless to multiply instances. From this hill is heard the sound of fairy drums; in that lake are seen reflected the ruins of a buried city; here the hill-sides have been hollowed into rude temples; there the confluence of two rivers is marked by some solitary temple on the bluff, below which the waters meet." In reading the above how vividly are we reminded of the mythical fancies which prevail amongst a large portion of our own people. Even the sketch of the far Eastern landscape might equally illustrate more than one well-known Irish scene.

Travellers from India describe the appearance of, and the rites practised at, holy wells situated in several parts of the East, in terms which remind us, who have lived in Celtic portions of Erin (and those districts comprise nearly the whole island), not a little of what we may often have witnessed at home. With us attendance

at such fonts, for devotional purposes, has been universally denounced by clergymen of all denominations. It is curiously true that the custom of offering prayers, &c., at holy wells is the same over a great part of Asia, Africa, and even of America, as it is in Ireland, though, of course, the orisons are as widely different as are the climes in which they are breathed. In one respect, however, the ritual seems to be unvaried—it closes always by the suspension on bushes, trees, or walls in the immediate neighbourhood of the well, of ribbons or rags, usually of very small proportions. Probably the origin of a custom so widely prevailing, so strange and unaccountable, will for ever defy the researches of the learned to trace it. Can the rite be derived from the inexplicable corruption of a once universal religion? It is only reasonable to assume that well-veneration had its origin in the fiery East. No doubt it was carried westwards as tides of mankind followed the course of the sun. After all it presents but one, although the most striking, evidence we possess of the direct descent of the mass of our people, from some long-forgotten tribe, or tribes, of the Old, Old World.

There exists abundant evidence of the fact that in ante-Christian days natives of Erin, in common with those of the British Islands generally, were wont to worship certain trees, rocks, pillar-stones, and springs. The reason for the continued veneration of many wells found in Ireland has been very happily explained by Dr. Joyce in his invaluable work on *Irish Place-Names*: “After the general spread of the Faith the people’s affection for wells was not only retained, but intensified; for most of the early preachers of the Gospel established their humble foundations—many of them destined to grow, in after years, into great religious and educational institutions—beside those fountains whose waters at the same time supplied the daily wants of the little communities, and served for the baptism of converts. In this manner most of our early saints became associated with wells, hundreds of which still retain the names of the holy men who converted and baptized the pagan multitudes on their margins.”

There are two holy wells on Inismurray—one of these stands outside the cashel, near the Water-gate, to which portal it probably gives name (fig. 61). It is dedicated to St. Molaise, and is covered by a stone-roofed, bee-hive-shaped, mortarless structure, measuring, internally, seven feet by six. The doorway, a truly Cyclopean work, is six feet in height, three in breadth at the lintel, and four at the base. Five stone steps lead from this ope to the water, which is neither abundant nor palatable.

Tobernacoragh.—Upon the opposite side of the island, on the brink of the ocean, is the second holy well (fig. 62). Like that of St. Molaise, it is protected by a building, of the bee-hive class, formed of large stones laid without mortar. From it extends, northward, a kind of stone-lined channel, flagged over at its ends, and having an open space in its centre. This channel, which seems to have been excavated through clay and rock to a depth of about two feet six inches below the natural surface, is twenty feet in length. The space referred to is adapted for the purpose of an open-air bath, and there can be little doubt of its having been so used. A scarcely-ever-ceasing flow of bright sparkling water passes from the well through the channel, and supposed bath, and, after running a few feet, falls over a low incline into the Atlantic. Between this very remarkable work, which seems unquestionably to have served the double purpose of a baptistry and bath, and *Ffynnawn Gwenvain* (the well of Gwenvain), at Rhoscolyn, in the island of Holyhead, there exists a striking analogy. Mr. Robert Young, who has described that well (see the *Journal R.H.A.A.I.* for July, 1881, p. 502), states that “Gwenvain was the daughter of Pawl Hen, of Manaw, and sister of Penlan, who about 630 A.D. was the head of a small sisterhood at Rhoscolyn, of which the cloister-garden still remains—a solitary but interesting relic.”

The name *Tobernacoragh* may be translated the “Well of Assistance”; and very curious stories are told by the islanders in connexion with this extremely weird but romantic-looking place. It not unfrequently happens, especially during the spring and winter months, that,



Fig. 61.—*Tober Molaise*, or St. Molaise's Well, near the Cashel.



Fig. 62.—*Tobernacoragh*, “The Well of Assistance.”

owing to the prevailing tempestuous weather, communication between Inismurray and the mainland is, even for weeks, rendered impracticable. On such occasions it was the custom of the natives to drain the waters of this well into the ocean, as they believed that by so doing, and by the offering up of certain prayers, the elemental war might cease, and a holy calm follow. I was not able to learn from the islanders the precise time when the well had been last drained. It is probably some years since a rite so very pagan in character was practised, and an offering poured forth that would seem originally intended to propitiate some old sea-god of Celtic mythology. Could the god have been Neptune himself under another name?

The Leachta, Stations, &c., with their Monuments.—In the preceding chapters I have described the heart and citadel of Inismurray—the cashel and its contents. But much remains to excite the attention and admiration of all true antiquaries. I allude to the *leachta* and stations which occur at pretty uniform distances from each other, all round the rocky, storm-worn margin of the island. The *leachta* consist of uncemented stones, usually boulders, set together in the form of a cube, the sides of which average about five feet in breadth and height respectively. These rude piles were anciently surmounted by a miniature *dallán*, or pillar, engraved with the figure of a cross more or less elaborately designed, but in every instance of extremely early character. From some of these monuments the stone has been removed, and in others the carvings with which they were enriched have been so affected by the storms of more than twelve centuries, that even the practised eye will fail to trace the character of what had been ornamentation.

Monuments of this kind are not confined to Inismurray; indeed they are to be found upon not a few of the islands of the west and south (and upon retreats situate on inland waters, as most notably on Station Island, Lough Derg, county Donegal), which had been occupied by early Christian communities. They are everywhere regarded as altars, and each was dedicated to its particular saint.

The stations usually exhibit altars precisely similar to the *leachta*, but are, as a rule, enclosed by a low dry-stone wall, rarely more than two or three feet in height, and about three feet in thickness. These walls are of the rudest possible construction, and must be looked upon only as fences intended to protect the sacred spaces which they encircle against the encroachments of cattle. A single gap, usually exhibiting inclined jambs, is found in each, and was the only entrance. These opes do not appear ever to have been covered by a lintel, or arch. It is manifest that the walls were too low to have admitted within them the construction of a covered portal, or doorway, and there is no reason to suppose that they were at any time higher than we now find them.

Like the *leachta*, the stations were dedicated to certain saints, but the name of the particular saint has not in every instance been preserved.

Pilgrims from the mainland still not unfrequently visit Inismurray. Perhaps owing to the difficulty and uncertainty of the passage during unsettled weather, no particular day would seem to have been appointed for their attendance at the several shrines. The "rounds" are usually commenced at *Teach Molaise*, and, following the course of the sun, all pilgrims proceed from station to station, and in this manner make a circuit of the island. Even the natives do not seem to have any particular patron day. Their "kingdom" is so diminutive that intending devotees are always within a few minutes' stroll of every centre of devotion which the island presents.

Olla Muire.—Let us now proceed on the usual track of the pilgrims. Starting eastward from *Clashymore* Harbour, a slight walk will bring us to *Olla Muire* (fig. 63), a very considerable station, which, as its name implies, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Time and tempest seem to have performed their work of denudation upon the masonry; but, as only a few stones are to be seen lying about, it is not likely that the work has lost much of its original elevation. Its greatest height is about two feet six inches. The thickness varies, in parts, from

two to three feet; but owing to various causes, bulging, and dislocation of stones, &c., it is difficult to secure accurate measurements. The wall is forty-two paces in circumference; its figure a somewhat irregular circle. A gap on the south-eastern side shows where the entrance had been; but the stones of the jambs no

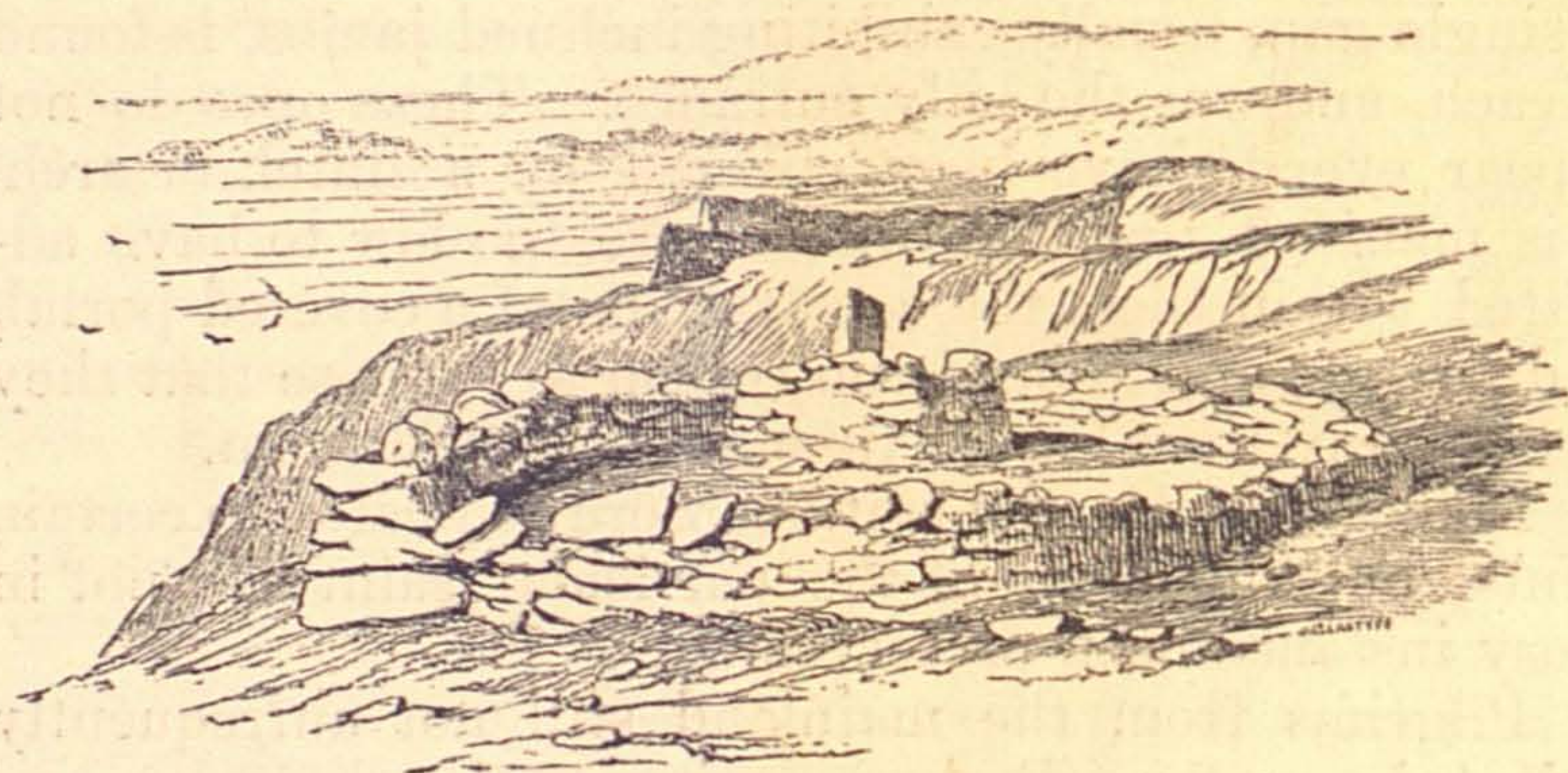


Fig. 63.—*Olla Muire* Station (pronounced Ollamurray).

longer remain *in situ*. As nearly as possible within the centre of this enclosure stands an altar of the usual quadrangular form, measuring, every way, about four feet. From its table rises a very rude stone. This at one time probably exhibited an incised cross, of which no trace, at present, can be discerned.

Trathán-na-righfhear (pronounced Trahanareer) Station. —At a short distance westwards from *Olla Muire*, will be found a most interesting station called *Trathán-na-righfhear*, the “Tratan of the Chieftains” (fig. 64). The buildings, as usual, are composed of rough unhammered and uncemented stones. In plan, the enclosing wall is a square, measuring fifteen feet by sixteen, externally, and with angles rounded off. It is two feet in height, and two feet six inches in thickness. The entrance, which is on the land side, is one foot eight inches wide at the base. The right-hand jamb as you enter consists of a single stone; the opposite jamb appears to have been disturbed. It is quite certain that the wall was never



Fig. 64.—*Traíannarig fear* (pronounced Trahanareer) Station.

higher than it is at present, so there was no occasion for a lintel to the passage.

A most curious feature in connexion with this station consists of a bee-hive cell (which still, in parts, retains its stone roof), attached to the western face of the wall and measuring ten feet in diameter on the interior (fig. 66). This was entered, from the area of the station, by a doorway one foot ten inches high by two feet two inches in breadth. The passage is covered by a large flat lintel, which still remains undisturbed. This little building was probably the dwelling-place of some ancho-rite, and its occupant must have been obliged to creep on hands and knees through this extraordinary doorway whenever he required to enter or depart from his strange domicile.

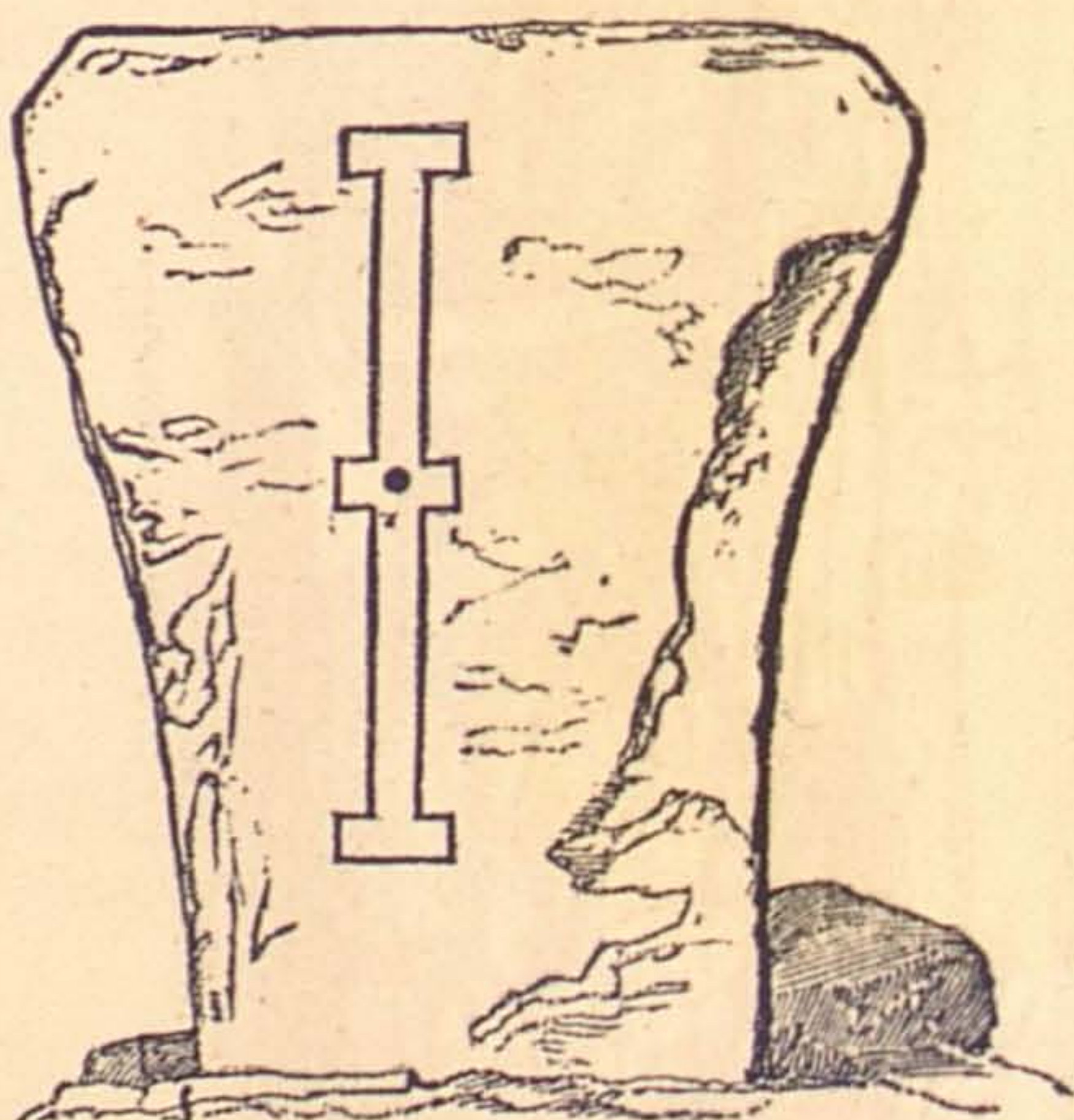


Fig. 65.—Cross on Altar of *Tratánnarig fear* Station.
Height above Socket, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The altar is well and strongly built, the stones being of unusually large size, but there is no appearance of mortar; and the only evidence of a chisel having been used in connexion with it occurs upon a flat slab of sandstone, which rises from it, and upon which a highly quaint and strangely-designed cross, one foot in length, has been deeply engraved (fig. 65). The vertical limb of this remarkable figure is crutched at top and base, and from its centre, which encloses a small cup, extend two



Fig. 66.—Bee-hive Cell in *Tratinnarig fear*.

diminutive arms, the length of the horizontal member thus formed exactly coinciding with that of the terminations already referred to. The stone on which this cross is cut measures above its present socket seventeen inches and a-half by fourteen and a-half in breadth. It may be sunk to a considerable depth in the masonry of the altar. The work is, doubtless, one of the earliest remains of its class to be found in Ireland. Bishop Graves discovered one almost exactly like it, both in size and style, in a *killeen*, or primitive Christian cemetery, situate in a remote district of Kerry. He was also fortunate enough to find on Innisvicillane, one of the Blasket Islands, off the coast of the same county, a stone bearing crosses very much of the same type, and, in addition, an ogam inscription. These Kerry monuments are pronounced, on the highest authority, to be as old, at least, as the commencement of the seventh century.

Pursuing our tour, still in the course of the sun, we almost immediately arrive at *Pollnashantunny*, the "Cavern of the Old Wave," a very singular name, in connexion with which, no doubt, of old "hung a tale" of romance and wonder, now lost with the *seannachies* of dim Gaelic days. The scene is weird and awful. Under certain conditions of atmosphere, wind, and wave, this glorious example of ocean's sculpturing would form a subject worthy of the genius of a Petrie or a Danby to *suggest*—it could not be painted.

Leachta Crois mór (pronounced Crossmore)—"Monument of the Great Cross."—This station evidently derives its name from a cross which rises from the centre of an altar standing within the enclosure of a low stone wall, or fence, twenty-four paces in circumference, and differing in no particular from structures of its class which have been already noticed. There is here, however, no trace of a bee-hive cell. The entrance was, as usual, from the land side, and does not appear ever to have been covered (fig. 67). The buildings exhibit no sign of molestation by the hand of man; no stones are lying about. In all likelihood this station, allowing something for wear and tear of storm, stands very much as it



Fig. 67.—*Leachta Crois mór* (pronounced Laghta Crossmore) Station.

appeared when first erected. Its most interesting feature is the cross-inscribed flagstone (fig. 68) which, rising conspicuously above the level of the bleached and mossy wall, seems to sentinel one of the wildest, most impressive, and, I may add, delightfully characteristic scenes to be met with in Erin, whether upon mainland

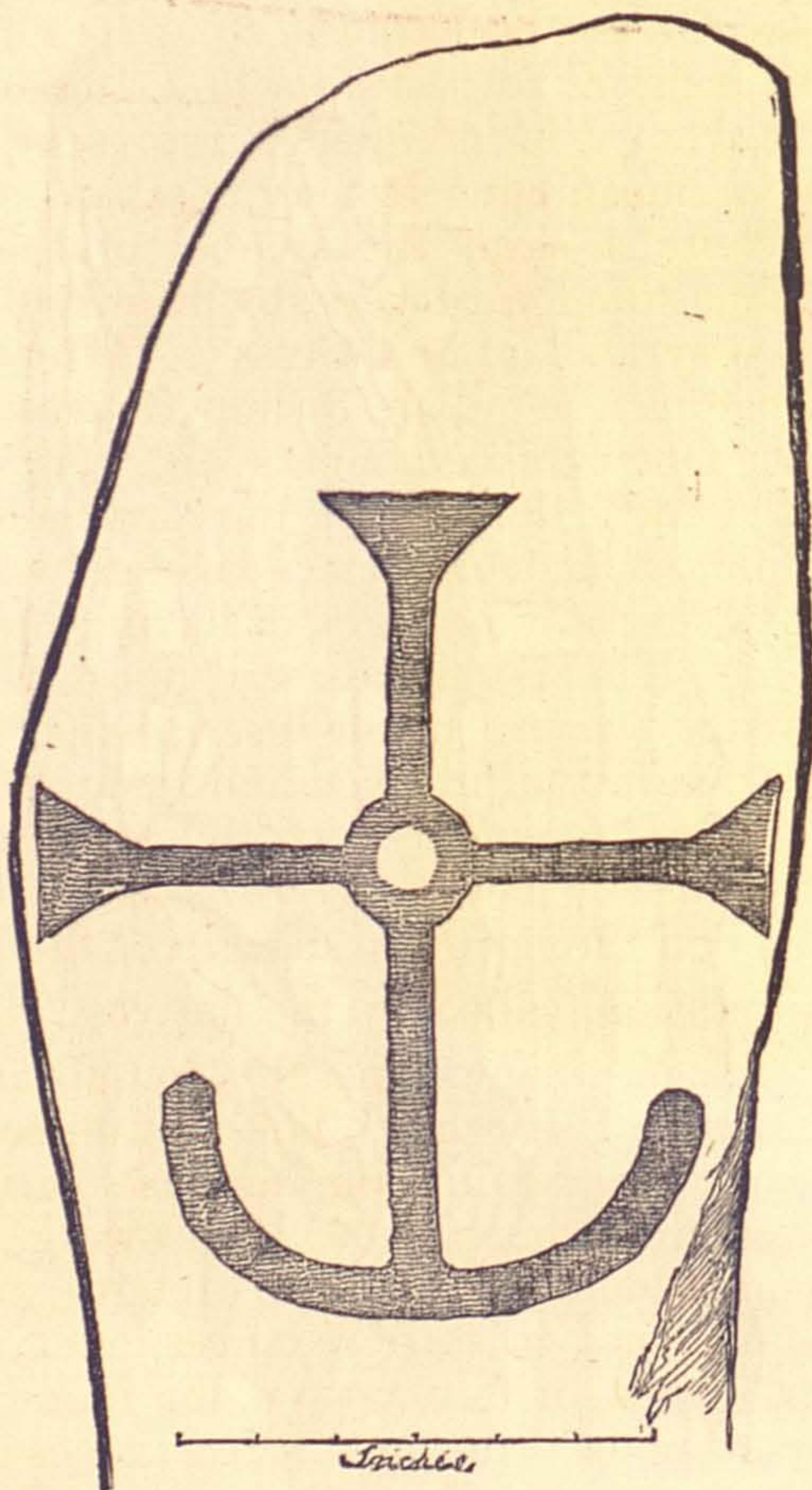


Fig. 68.—Cross on *Leachta Crois mór*. Height, 19 inches.

or islet. The height of this monument is nineteen inches; but of course a considerable part of the base does not appear. Its breadth is ten inches, as is also the length of the carving, which figure represents,

probably, the oldest style of cross found in Western Europe. Examples every way similar were seen (and copied) by Bishop Graves, of Limerick, in Coptic churches upon the banks of the Nile.

The *Crois mór* design is essentially the same as one which appears upon a stone discovered in the year 1870, in Glencar, county Kerry, by Bishop Graves, who thus notices it:—"On the back (of the stone) is a Latin cross, rising out of a figure respecting which I cannot venture to determine what it is intended to represent, or what is its symbolical meaning. It may, perhaps, have been meant to denote a ship, the symbol of the Christian Church, as a mast and yard were, by primitive Christians, regarded as a symbol of the Cross." After describing this and a companion pillar, Bishop Graves continues: "That these Glencar monuments are very ancient is proved by the fact, that whilst the ornamental crosses inscribed upon them manifest considerable taste, the stones themselves show no signs of having been squared or hammered. This is the case with most, if not all, of the monuments bearing ogam inscriptions. But these latter differ from the uninscribed and undoubtedly pagan monuments in being generally much less massive."

Close to the rocky point of *Teernaneane*, or the "Place of the Birds," on the northern margin of the island, is a very curious station, called by the natives *Tratán Aodha*, the *Tratán of Aodh*, a name generally, but absurdly, translated into English "Hugh." The station consists of a dry wall nearly circular in plan, and measuring sixteen feet in internal diameter (fig. 69). This work, which presents a considerable batter, is of a strength and massiveness at least unusual in station fences, measuring fully four feet six inches in thickness at the foundation. Its greatest elevation is three feet three inches; but much of the wall is considerably lower, especially near the entrance, where it stands scarcely two feet in height. A most remarkable fact in connexion with this so-called "station" is, that it is completely environed by a *mur* of the rath class, and apparently consisting of earth and small stones. This surrounding rampart would scarcely, I imagine, be considered necessary for the requirements of



Fig. 69.—*Trañan Aodha* (pronounced Trahane) Station.

religious exercises only. It presents every appearance of the place having been a habitation of some kind—not a bee-hive hut certainly, as no *débris* of a stone roof can be discovered within or around the wall; but a covering constructed of lighter material, such as shingles or hides, may of old have sheltered so limited an inclosure. We read of a kind of work called *bo-dun*, or “cattle fort,” which was used in early times in Ireland for the better security of kine against sudden attack on the part of freebooters. The northern seaboard of the island being extremely lonely and open to rovers, may possibly have required a fold of refuge, and a defensive position for the old guardians of the coast, in cases of sudden predatory attack, especially during the long nights of winter.

A rambling and silly legend is told in connexion with a slight depression, supposed to be the mark of a child's foot, which appears on one of the stones at the entrance. The former is not worthy of repetition, and the latter is evidently a fossil-mark.

Tratán Aodha, in later times, may possibly have been mistaken for a station, especially as at a short distance from it stands an altar similar to those found in sacred inclosures of that description; but the name of the saint to whom it was dedicated has not been retained, and the pile is simply called *Altoir*, “altar.” It is square in plan, seventeen feet eight inches in girth at the ground, and still exhibits a finial, consisting of a rude flagstone devoid of cross or carving of any kind set upright in its summit.

In the same direction, a little inland from the brink of the cliff, a very slight grassy elevation, through which a few bleached stones appear, is styled by the natives *Leachta-na-sagart*, or the “Priest's Monument.” It is not remembered on the island who this ecclesiastic was, nor is there any reason assigned for his interment in a spot so far from any church, and where, certainly, but one solitary grave appears.

“LEACHTA PATRAIG” STATION.

At *Rue*, i. e. the “Red” Point, the most eastern extremity of the island, are the ruins of a fine altar bearing the above name. It measures eight feet six

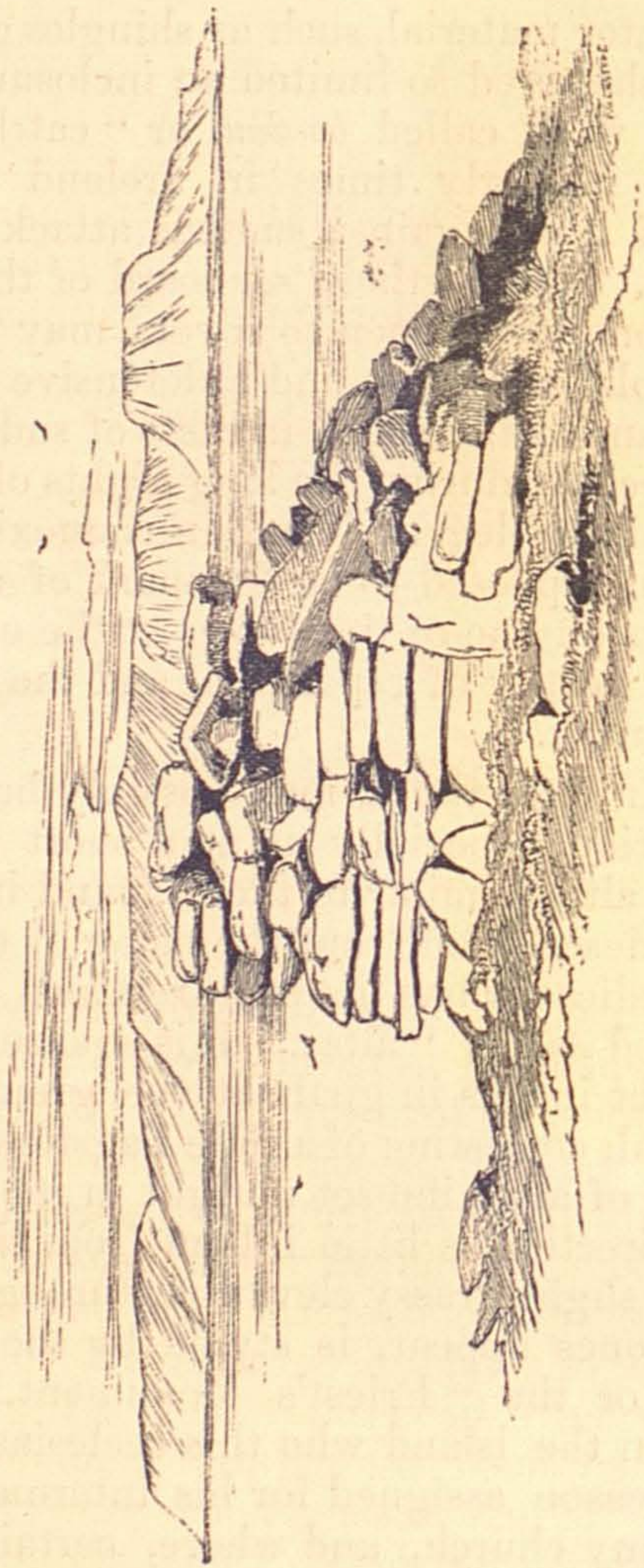


Fig. 70.—*Leachta Patraig* (pronounced Laghta Patrick) Station.

inches by six feet seven inches, and is at present four feet five inches in height (fig. 70). The upper courses of the masonry have been much displaced; and the customary cross, or rather topmost stone engraved with that figure (if it ever here existed), is no longer to be found. The view from Rue Point is extensive and beautiful, embracing the entire range of the Sligo Mountains from Benbulbin, as far almost as the Bundrowse river. There exists no tradition in reference to this monument; but, from the name it bears, there can be no doubt that it was raised to the honour and memory of our National Saint.



Fig. 71.—*Trionid mór* (pronounced Treenode more), or the Great Station of the Trinity.

A walk by the cliff's edge of little more than a quarter of a mile will bring us to the Great Station of the Trinity, called by the people of the island "*Trionid mór*" (fig. 71). Here are the well-preserved remains of a structure measuring eight paces in length, by seven in width externally, and, like a church, extending east and west. There is a passage in the western end, but no lintel remains, if indeed one had been required to an ope which could never have been more than a few feet in height. The masonry has a comparatively modern look, and is like that of the less ancient portions of *Teampull-na-mban*, or the "Church of the Women," standing close at hand—which additions or restorations are probably not older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The interior of the station is much choked with stones and weeds, and may, very likely, contain a number of interesting monuments which lie hidden. A pillar-stone,

however, raises its cross-inscribed head above the gray walls and tangled herbage (fig. 72); it measures upwards of three feet in height, and one foot six inches and a-half in breadth, just above the arms of the large cross, where

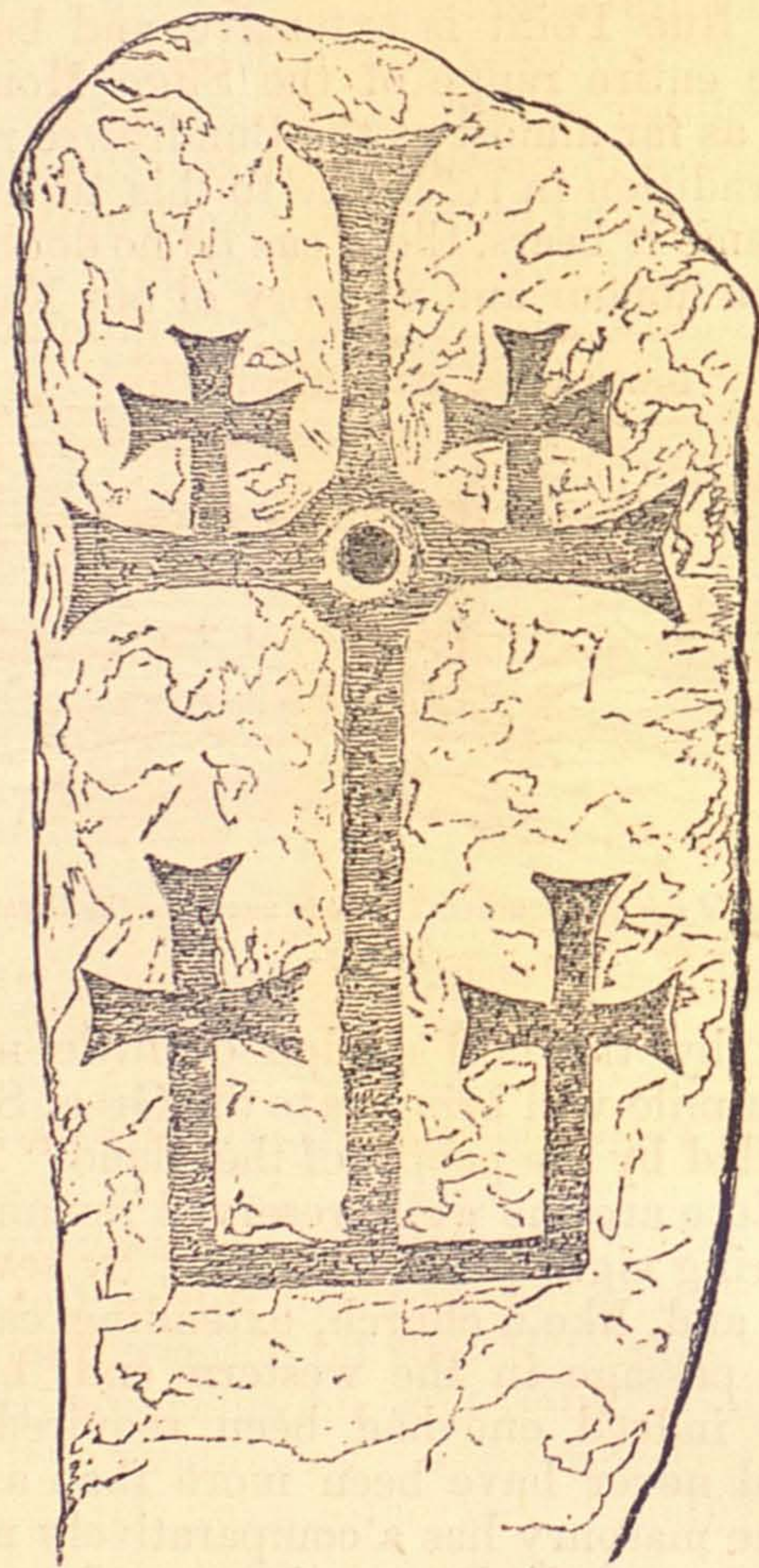


Fig. 72.—Head of Pillar Stone in *Tríonid mór*, or Great Station of the Trinity.

it is widest. It is quite impossible to explain the symbolism of these crosses. Other examples of the same design will be found described in these pages; but this cross is by far the finest. All are very early.

A few yards from *Tríoníd mór*, to the south-westward, is the Little Station of the Trinity (fig. 73). It is twelve paces round, very rudely constructed, and of inconsiderable height; yet, on account of the cross-inscribed flagstone which it bears set up near its centre, the spot remains a point of high interest to students of early Celtic art. The stone measures two feet in height from its socket—composed of a number of rough boulders—and one foot one inch and a-half at its broadest part near the head; the base is ten inches and a-half in width. Each of its greater surfaces has been sculptured with the figure of a cross, one of which is highly artistic in style, and much resembles in design and method of execution the beautiful figure

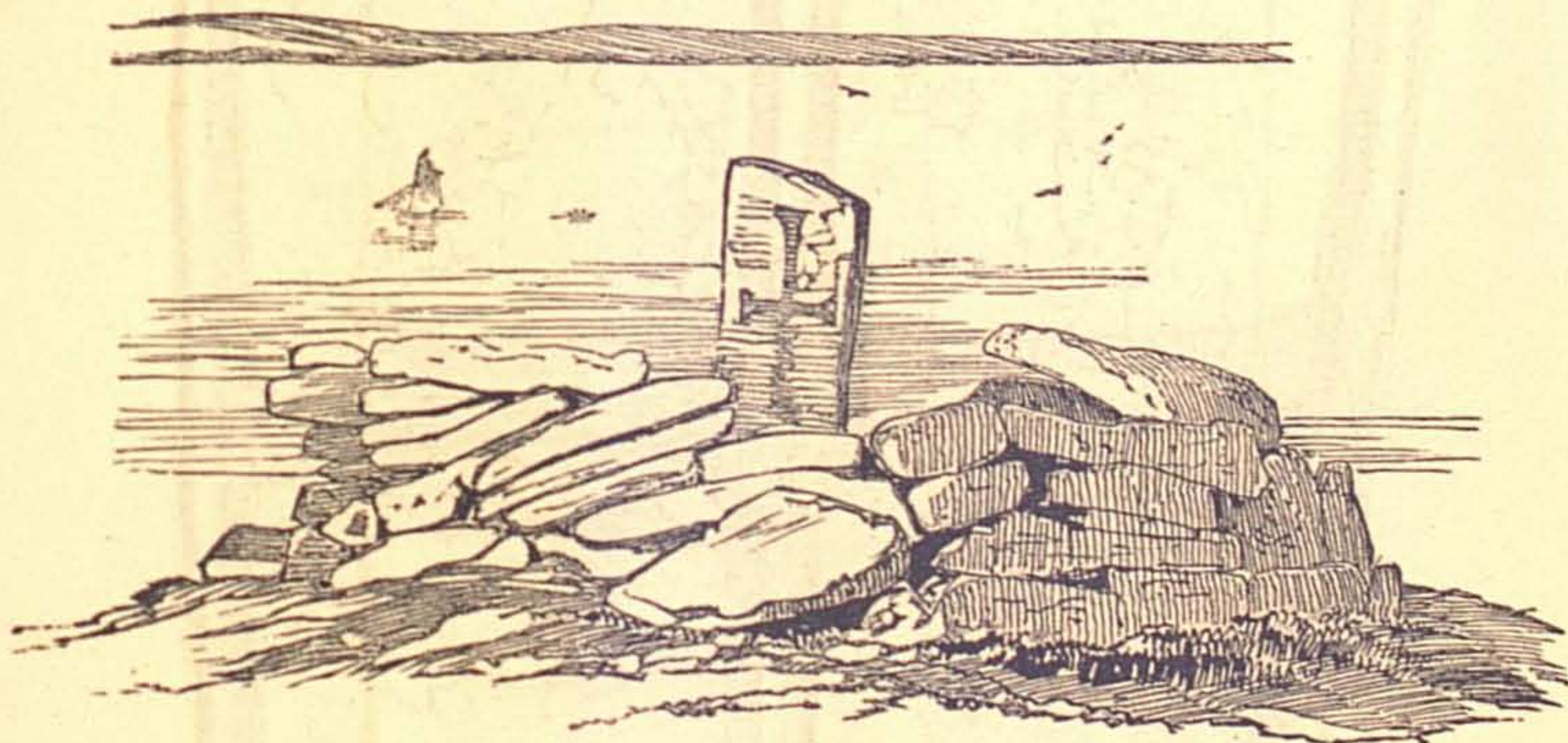


Fig. 73.—*Tríoníd beg* (pronounced Treenode beg), or the Little Station of the Trinity.

noticed at p. 98, as occurring on a slab now standing upon an altar attached to the southern side of the cashel wall upon the exterior. It will be observed, however, that here there is a difference, inasmuch as three of the triquetras, which terminate the members of the cross, exhibit in one of their loops (that joining the figure) a pellet in *basso-relievo*; and at the intersection may be noticed a quatrefoil, the bands or fillets of which, according to the usual spirit of early Irish art, must have interlaced, though now, owing to the action for ages of frost and rain, the carvings have become considerably worn and obscured; nevertheless the pattern, by the practised eye, can still be distinctly traced (fig. 74).

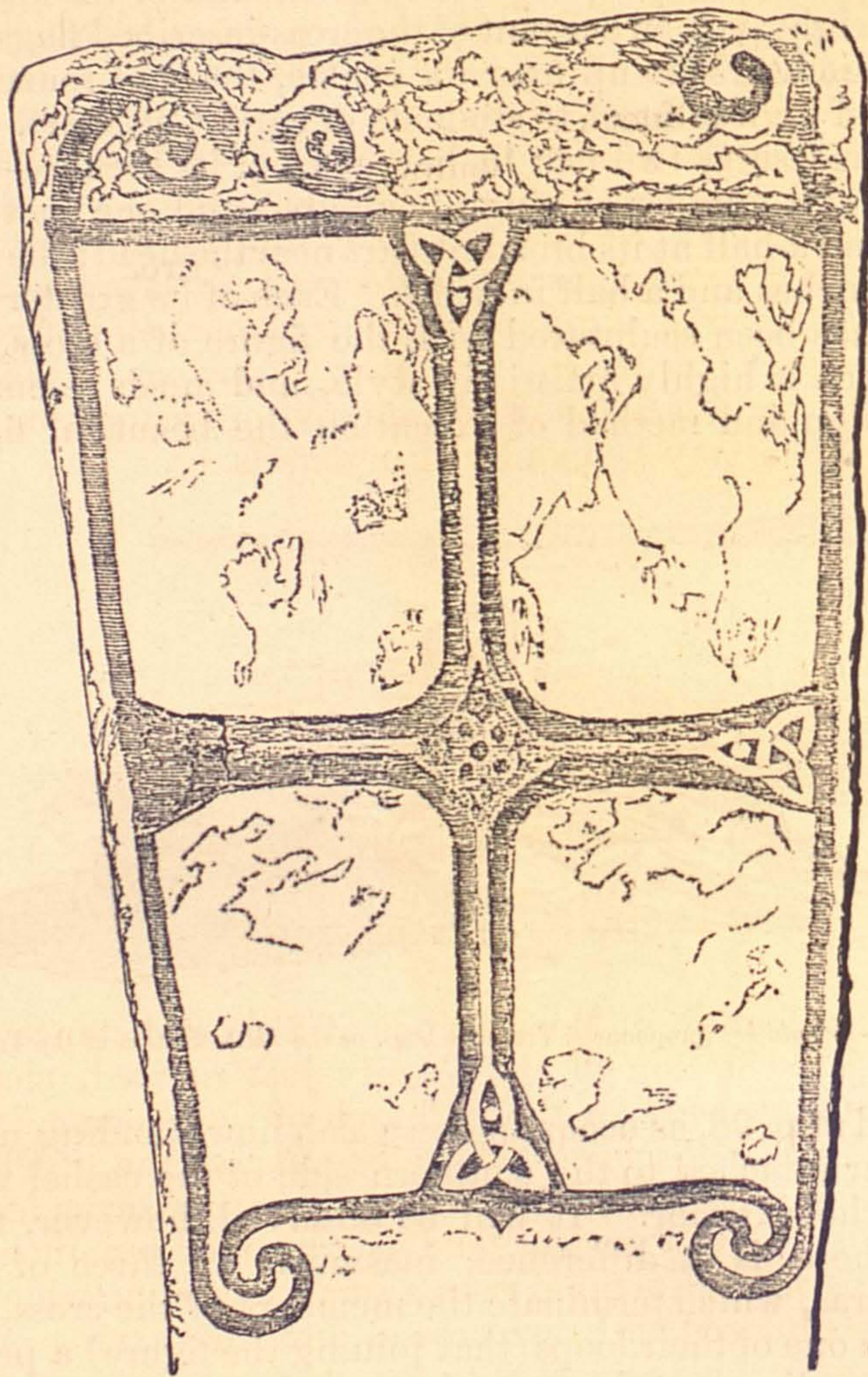


Fig. 74.—Cross-inscribed Stone in *Trionid beg*, or the Little Station of the Trinity.
Height above Socket, 2 feet.

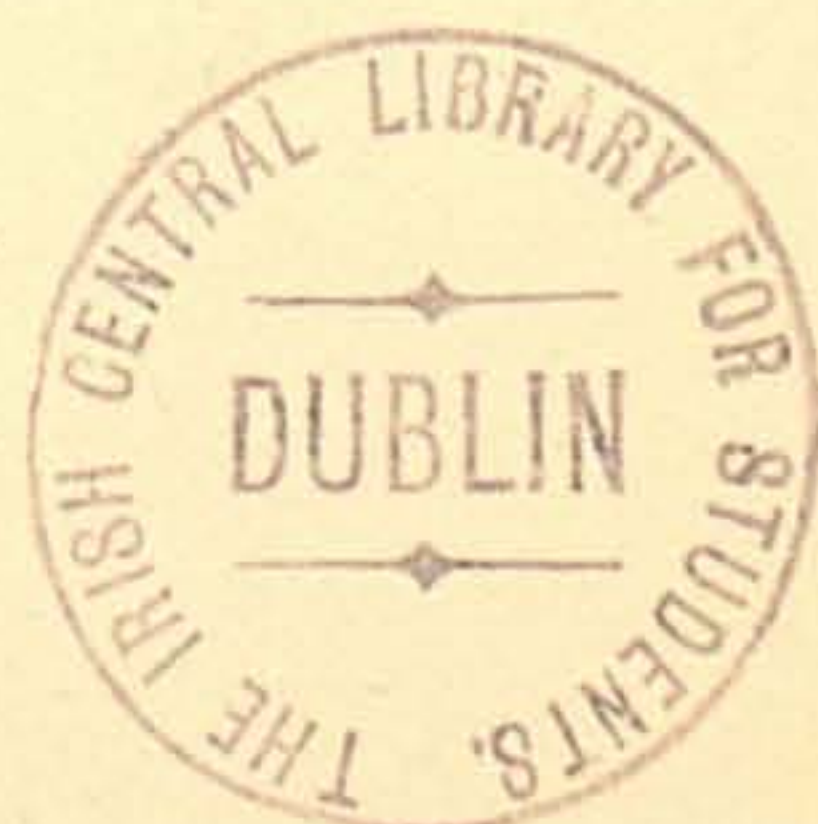
Of the cross found upon what may be styled the reverse of the monument, all that need be here said is, that it possesses no feature of special interest, and is therefore sufficiently illustrated in fig. 73, which presents a general view of the station. Yet, from its very simplicity, the design is valuable as being found with a companion cross, highly elaborate in character. The two being certainly contemporaneous, it indicates a fact, which writers on the subject of Celtic ecclesiastical art might often do well to bear in mind, that speculation as to the ages of monuments of various classes found in Ireland is rather hazardous, if directed only by consideration of the degree of richness or rudeness which may be exhibited in details.



Fig. 75.—The Station of Mary.

The Station of Mary stands at a short distance from the Little Station of the Trinity just noticed, close to *Teampull-na-mban*, or the "Church of the Women," sometimes called *Teampull Muire* or *Murry*, the "Church of Mary." It is of oblong form, measuring seven feet by four feet eleven inches, and is two feet ten inches in height. From its table rises a small flat stone which has been sculptured with two crosses, but the carving on one side has become almost entirely obliterated by time and the growth of lichen—so much so that it is impossible to trace the design with any degree of certainty.

In the close vicinity of this altar or station is a pillar or flag standing upright, and measuring two feet eight inches in length, eleven inches in width, and seven inches and a-half in thickness. Upon one side is inscribed a



very early cross, Latin in character, and measuring one foot three inches in length. The opposite side is plain. A cross very similar occurs upon the "holed stone" pillar which stands by the side of the pathway verging upon the "Cemetery of the Women," in which this relic stands. The holed stone to which I refer has been already described. There is a second upright stone remaining in the same cemetery, which, on account of the singularity of the cross design which it bears, is particularly worthy of antiquarian notice. Indeed, I do not recollect to have seen elsewhere anything like it, but at the same time I am not prepared to assert that the Inismurray example has not its fellow in some remote and hitherto unexplored cemetery of Ireland or Scotland, or



Fig. 76.—Pillar-stone near the Station of Mary. Back view, showing remaining Cross. Height, above ground, 2 feet 8 inches.

of some other country where, at an early period, Christianity prevailed. The figure may be thus described:—The vertical member or shaft is one foot eight inches in length; at a distance of three inches from its head the shaft is bisected by a horizontal bar four and a-half inches long—the formation of a Latin cross being the result. The upper members of this figure terminate in the small triangular expansions so often found in early Irish works of a similar class. The cross, from the level of its arms, is surmounted by a kind of semicircular nimbus ten inches in diameter, and consisting of two slightly sunken bands, separated from each other by a space of about

three-quarters of an inch. These bands, at the level already indicated, cease to be concentric, and are continued downwards, in gentle but not parallel curves, until they join the shaft—the one at a distance of six inches and a-half from the cross-head, the other, and outer, four inches and a-half lower. A double heart, or kite-like figure, is thus presented.

The lower part of the shaft seems set in a semicircular groove or band, through which it passes to a dis-

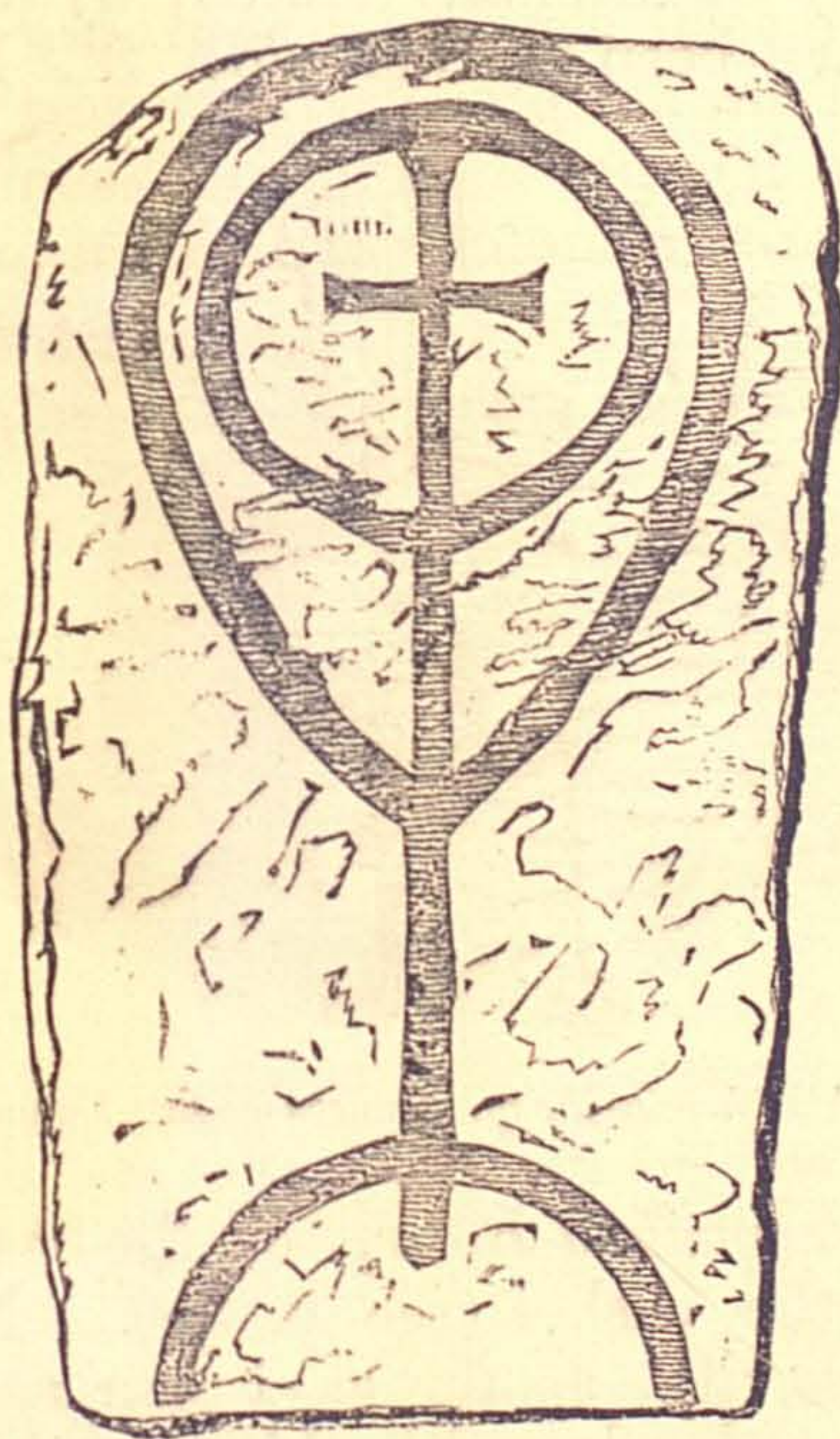


Fig. 77.—Pillar-stone in the Cemetery of the Women.

tance of one inch and three-quarters. This termination had the same diameter as the nimbus. Can it be supposed to denote an anchor? We know that by the early Christians of Rome an anchor was considered emblematic of their faith, and that it has been found engraved upon their tombs, or memorial stones.

Though varying slightly here and there, the thickness of all members of this most curious example of symbolism may be described as more or less uniform. Of the great

antiquity of the monument there can be little doubt. The stone is of comparatively small size, measuring only two feet three inches in height, by fourteen inches in breadth.

As has been already intimated, the celebrated St. Columba—better remembered by his countrymen under the name *Columbkille*, or “Columb of the Churches,” from the number of religious foundations which he had established in every part of this kingdom and in Scotland—is traditionally stated, by the Inismurray natives, to have been partner with St. Molaise in the

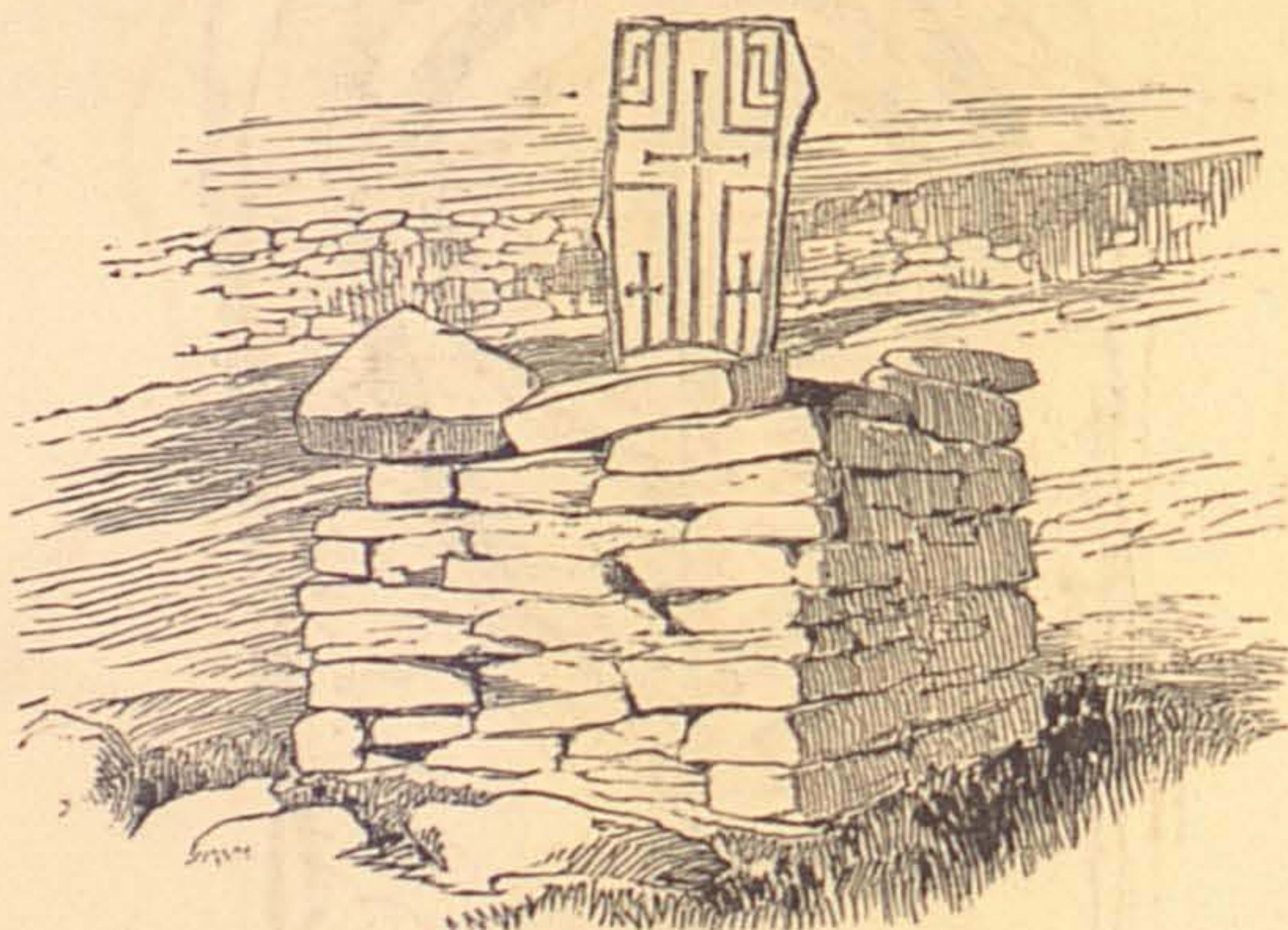


Fig. 78.—*Leachta Choluimcille* (pronounced Laghta Columkille) Station.

erection of *Teampull-na-Bfear*, or the “Church of the Men,” within the cashel (see p. 50). No manuscript or printed authority, as far as I can ascertain, exists to connect St. Columba with this island, and yet, that he had often visited the place can hardly be doubted, his famous monastery of *Druim-cliaibh-na-g-cros*, or “Drumcliffe of the Crosses,” lying at a little distance from it on the opposite coast of Sligo. In a poem attributed to St. Columba occur the lines:—

“Beloved of my heart, also is the West
Drumcliffe at Culcinne’s Strand.”

We may assume that the founder of the monastery of Iona, of *Tor Inis*, now Tory Island, off the coast of

Donegal, and of other sea-encompassed or maritime localities, was no indifferent sailor, and that while sojourning at "beloved" Drumcliffe he would, at least occasionally, be tempted to make a curach trip to the neighbouring islet, where ruled his friend Molaise. Be this as it may, we find in close proximity to the remains last noticed a station (fig. 78) still called by the people *Leachta Cholwimcille*. This altar, which is perhaps the best-preserved work of its class remaining upon Inismurray, is nearly

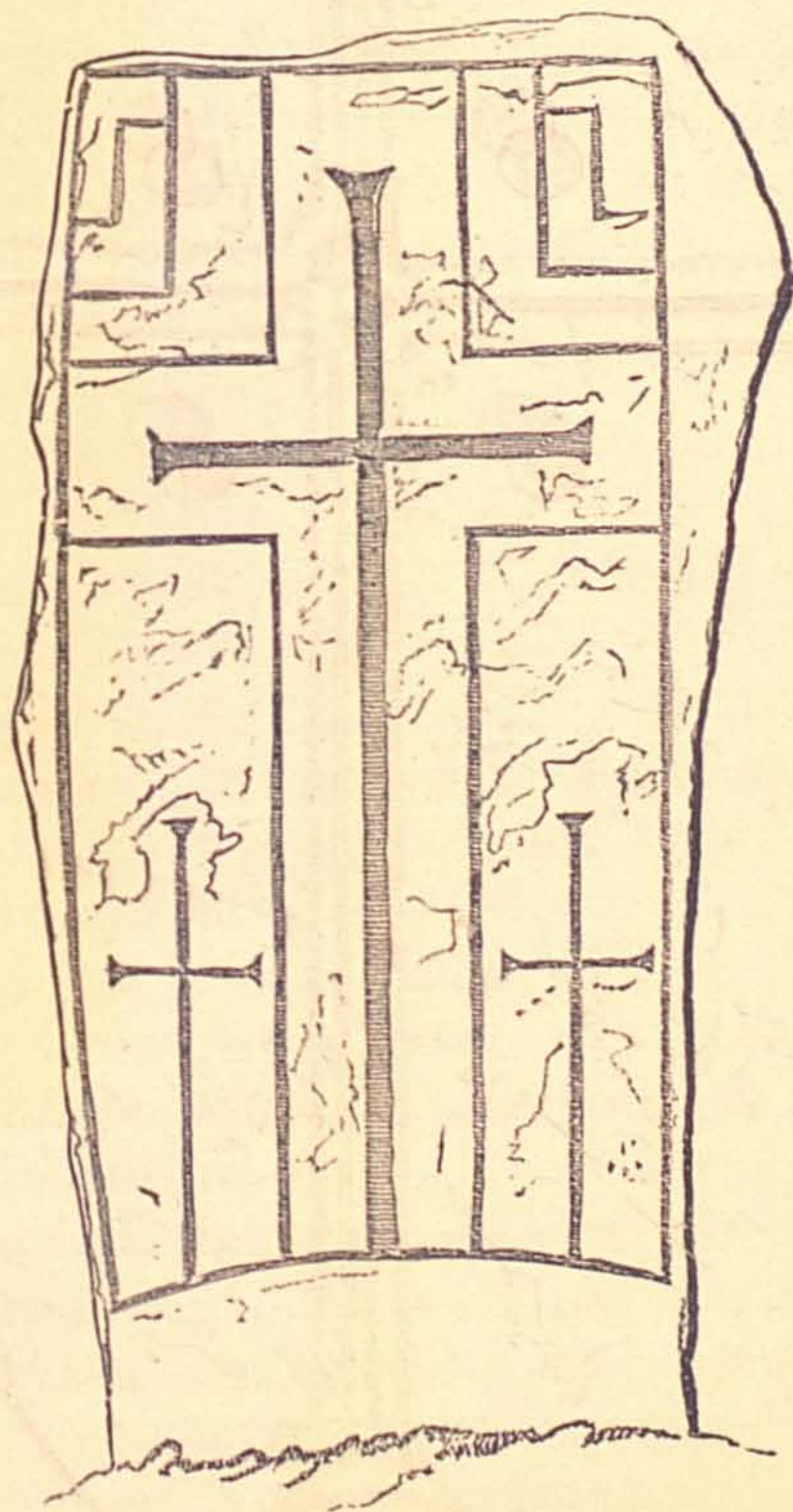


Fig. 79.—Columbkille's Altar-flag—Front View. Height, 31 inches.

square in plan, measuring, at the ground, four feet seven inches and a-half, by four feet two. Its height is three feet four inches. Some of the upper stones seem loose and a little displaced, otherwise the masonry has but slightly suffered from "Time's effacing fingers." As usual, from the centre rises a cross-carved flag. In this

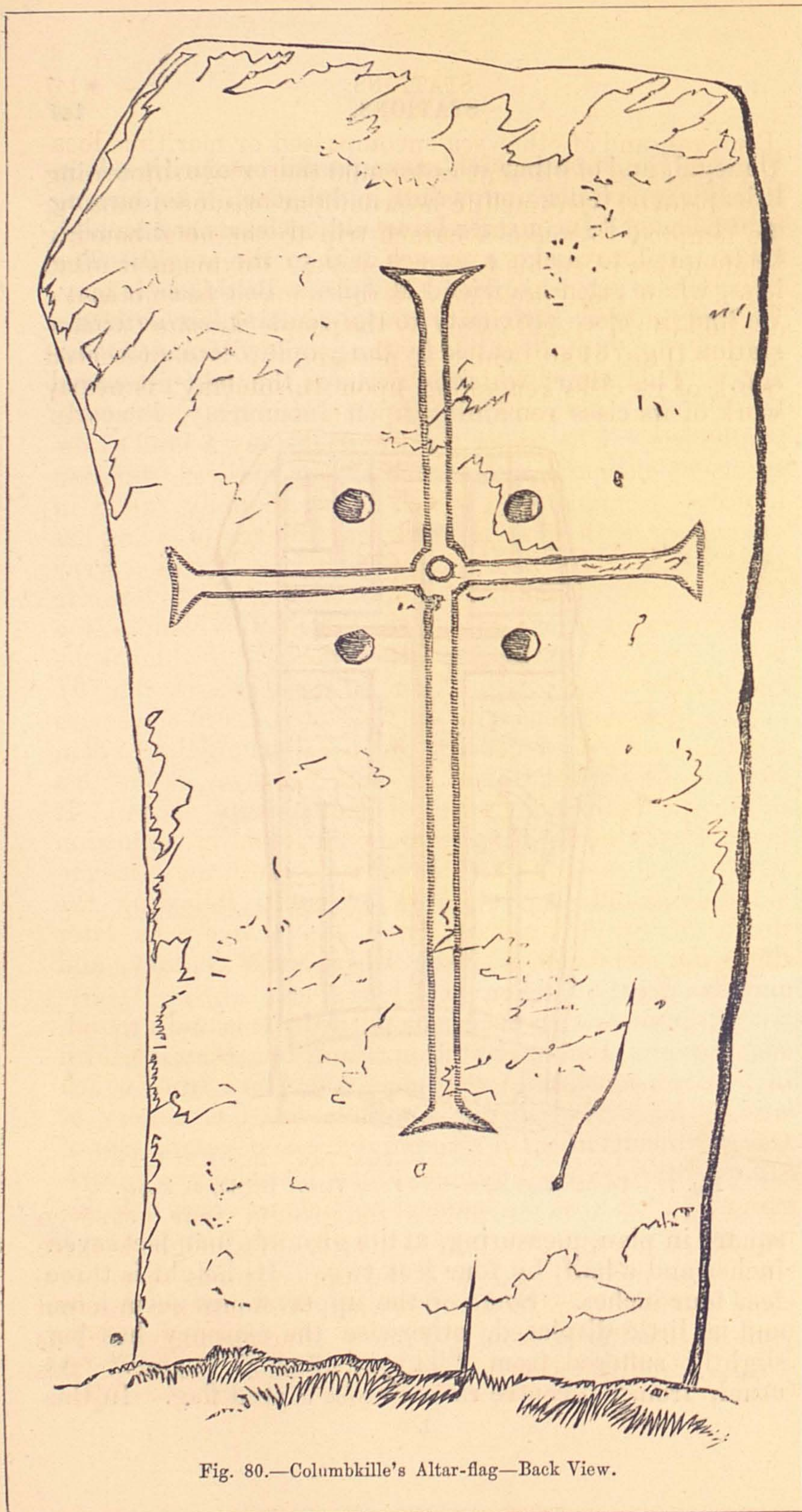


Fig. 80.—Columbkille's Altar-flag—Back View.

instance the stone, which measures thirty-one inches in height by sixteen and a-half in breadth, must be considered particularly interesting, as it is inscribed on both sides, the figures being crosses of the earliest type. The richest carving occurs on the side which nearly faces *Teampull Muire*. It consists of a plain Latin cross, within the lower quadrants of which there are two crosslets, also Latin; the three rising from a curved line. It is possible that in the curvature of this line exists some cryptic symbolism. The upper quadrants display a kind of design not uncommon on some of our earliest Christian lapidary remains, and which is occasionally found in connexion with enamel work on bronzes of what has been called the "late Celtic period." It has a very Grecian look. Round the central cross are lines forming a second large cruciform figure. The entire composition is enclosed by a continuous border, the base of which is the curious curved line supporting the three crosses (fig. 79).

The reverse carving is a plain, severe Latin cross with a small circle in its centre, the usual triangular expansions at the termination of its shaft and arms, and with a dot or cup depression in each of its quadrants (fig. 80). It is extremely interesting from being found in connexion with its more elaborate companion. Both may be considered as old as a time immediately following the death of St. Columba. They can scarcely be later than the commencement of the seventh century, and may be a little earlier.

We have now all but accomplished the island's round, *Reilie Odrain*, the next station, lying less than one-fifth of a mile eastward of *Ollamurry*, the point from which we started. The name signifies, the "Cemetery of Odran," or "Oran," a contemporary and companion of St. Columba, who, by-the-by, had elsewhere a burial-ground called after his name, viz. *Reilig Ourain*, adjoining the monastery of Iona. Of the Scottish *Reilig* I shall have, presently, a word to say.

The station is an enclosure of very early date, as may be judged from the style of its dry-stone masonry. Near the centre is an altar which, as it exactly resembles others already described, requires here little

notice beyond a statement of its measurements. In length it is seven feet six inches, and in breadth six feet, the height averaging about three feet six inches. The surrounding space has evidently long been used as a cemetery, many flag-stones, and other sepulchral memorials lying about overshadowed by a wilderness of weeds and briers. The aspect of the spot is indeed one of loneliness and neglect, but happily the masonry does not appear in any part to have suffered from the effects of time, or of modern restoration. The rank growth of vegetation, however, which renders a full examination of the monuments—here so interestingly grouped together—a work of some discomfort, might well be thinned, or

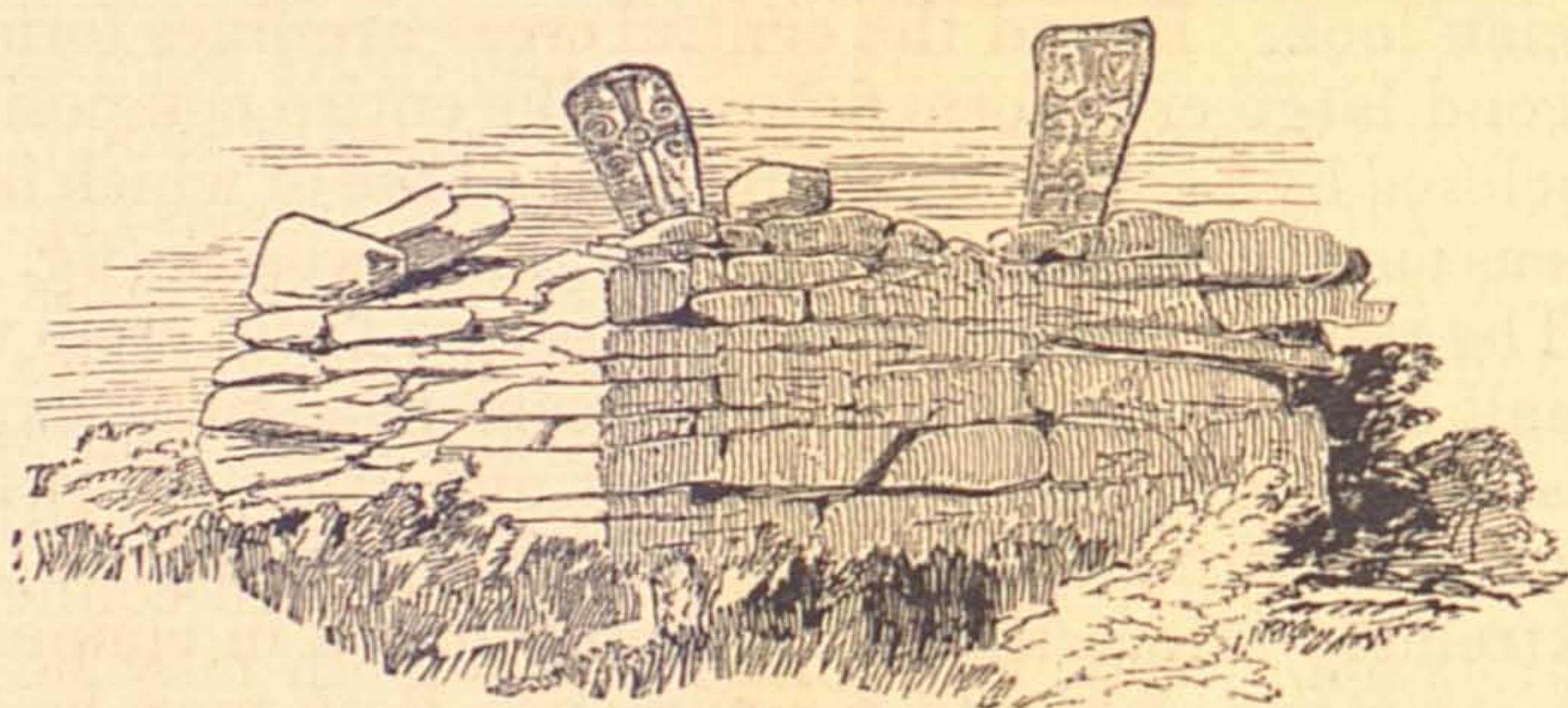


Fig. 81.—Altar of *Reilie-Odrain* (pronounced Relickoran) Station.

altogether removed. If picturesqueness alone were desired no one would have cause to complain of the present state of this venerable site.

Upon the altar are two examples of cross-design, one of which is highly interesting, as it exhibits in the arm terminations rather elaborate developments of the divergent spiral pattern, such as an artist of the sixth or seventh century might have studied from models even then ancient. The slab is of comparatively small size. (See scale attached to fig. 82, next page.) At the time of my visit to the place, the second slab, fig 83 (also evidently of great antiquity), was so overspread with lichen, and so weather-worn, that to trace much of its carving, with a degree of certainty, was hardly possible. From a drawing then made an

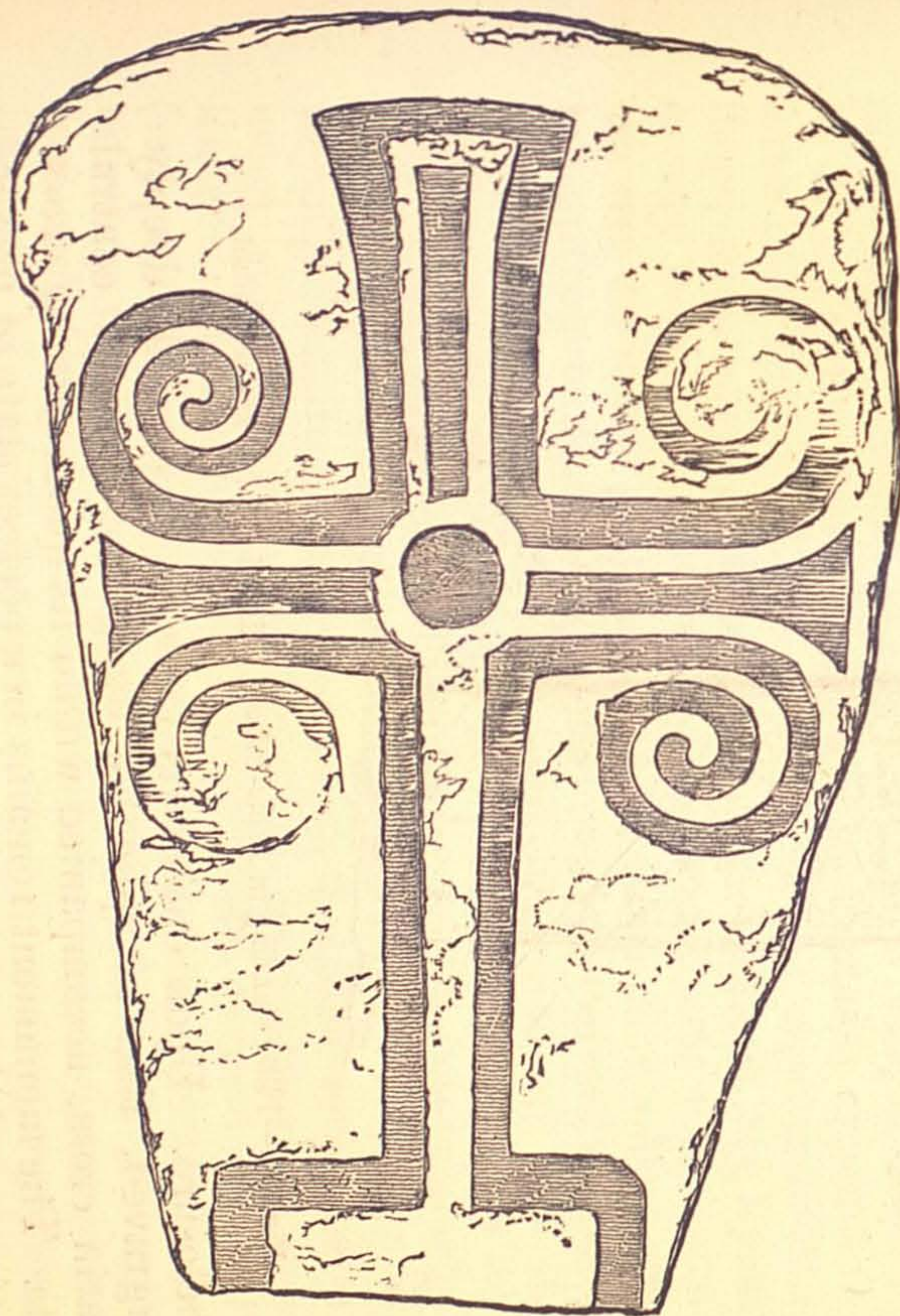


Fig. 82.—Stone on *Reilic-Odrain* Altar.—No. 1.



Fig. 83.—Stone on *Reilic-Odrain* Altar.—No. 2.

idea may be formed of the general appearance of the *leac* only. It is to be regretted that the patterns within the quadrants are not available for the purpose of comparison with others found upon the island. The stone measures eight inches in breadth, by about twenty-four in length from the socket.

A pillar, five feet in length (above ground), and fourteen inches in breadth (fig. 84), remains within the

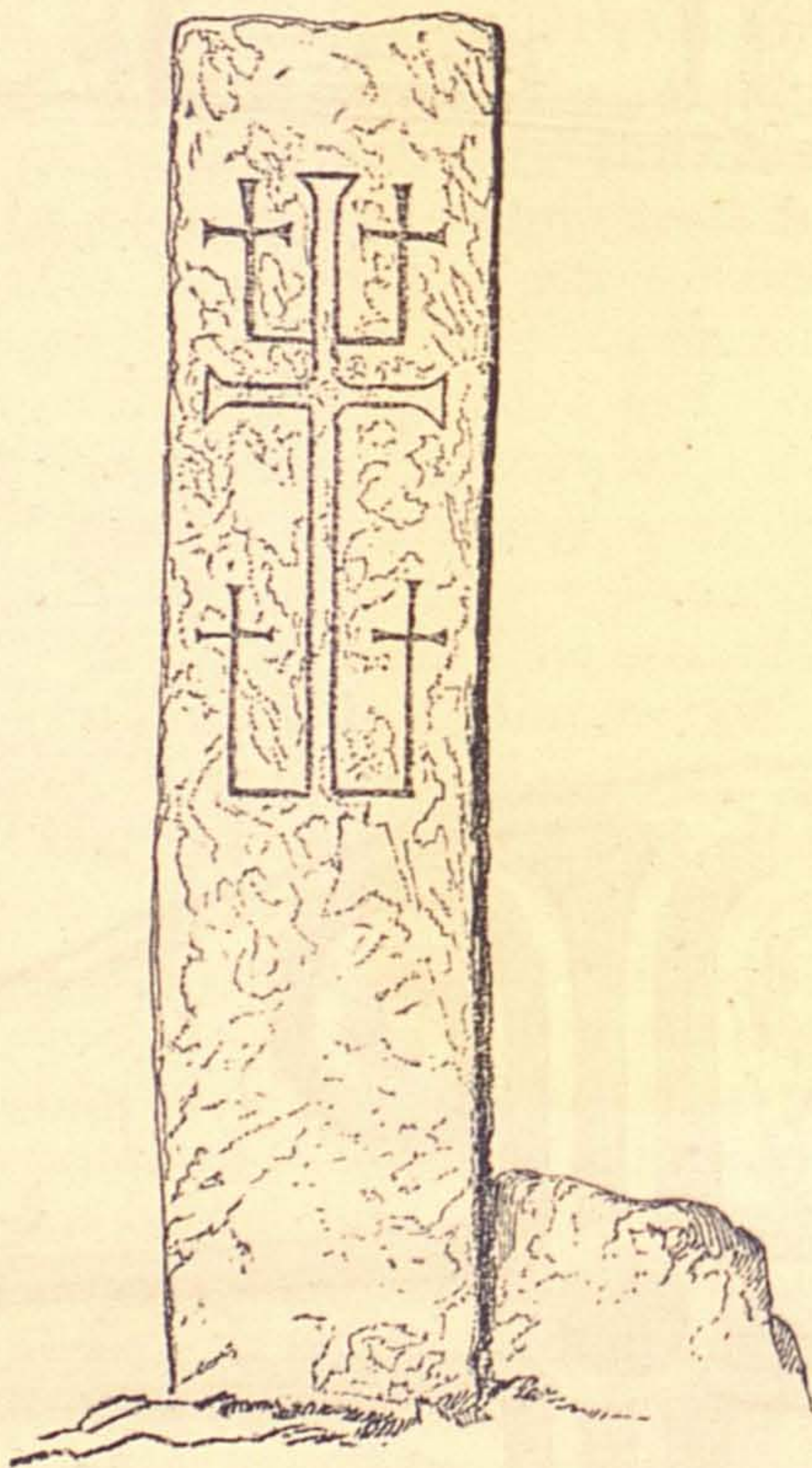


Fig. 84.—Pillar standing in *Reilic-Odrain*. Height, 5 feet above ground.

enclosure. Upon one of its faces is displayed, deeply engraved, that inexplicable design of a large central Latin cross, accompanied within its quadrants by crosslets. The monument remains in a perfect state of preservation, and may perhaps be considered the finest of its type that can be referred to.

Probably the cemetery retains other carved memorial stones ; but I have described all that are now above the present surface of the soil. The spot is sheltered from the usually prevailing north and west winds, so that vegetation, accompanied, of course, by an ever-increasing growth of mould, is here exceptionally luxuriant. From the following note, p. 283, in Pennant's *Voyage to the Hebrides*, it would seem that the burial-place on Iona, called after St. Oran, was, in the time of the writer of that interesting volume, very much in the same neglected state:—"Arrived at *Reilic-Ourain*, or the 'Burying-place of Oran': a vast enclosure, the great place of interment for the number of monarchs who were deposited here, and for the potentates of every isle, and their lineage ; for all were ambitious of lying in this holy spot. The place is in a manner filled with grave-stones, but so overgrown with weeds, especially with the common butter-bur, that very few are at present to be seen." The aspect of neglect exhibited by *Reilic-Odrain* on Inismurray might also well excite remark.

Now that the antiquities of Inismurray have been placed under the care of the Board of Works, it is much to be regretted that no responsible caretaker appears to have been appointed. Not a few of the cross-inscribed flags, even some of those bearing inscriptions, are liable at any moment to be utilized as head-stones to modern graves. In many parts of Ireland slabs of this kind are not unfrequently, on the occasion of an interment, placed immediately over the coffin, and buried along with it. Thus, a valuable work may be lost for ages, perhaps for ever. It is not only in this manner that loss and damage might overtake a number of the monuments which still happily remain. From Clonmacnois, Glendalough, and other sites of early ecclesiastical importance in this kingdom, many memorial stones of the highest interest have within the last twenty or thirty years been surreptitiously removed. The denudation of the great regal cemetery at Clonmacnois, by the removal or destruction of scores of its lettered stones, is a fact almost of yesterday. These memorials had been placed over the graves of kings, clerics, chieftains, warriors, poets, historians,

and other men of mark in their day. Of the inscriptions collected by Petrie at Clonmacnois in 1822 nearly one-half have disappeared !

The people of Inismurray would most certainly now resist any attempt to remove even the most fragmentary relic of early days from the island, or even from one cemetery to the other, but they cannot at all times be upon the watch. Several of the smaller *leacs*, and not a few of the altar-stones, as has been shown, are extremely small and portable. They are just the class of object to excite the cupidity of an average curiosity-hunter. An official custodian should attend every party of strangers by whom the island may be visited, if it were only to guard the lithic treasures from possible attacks by the ordinary modern tourist, who too often will not hesitate to chip and deface a time-honoured relic in order to add "specimens" to his scrappy and meaningless collection.

It was in this way that a celebrated inscribed stone, which was supposed to mark the grave of an Irish Monarch, gradually disappeared from the *Righfert*, or "King's Cemetery," at Glendalough. Bit by bit it was sold to tourists by the lying "guides" (so called) who infest that time-hallowed spot. In like manner the noble historical yew-tree which grew close to the cathedral, and had been, as there is every reason to believe, planted by St. Kevin himself, slowly vanished, its very roots being utilized by the manufacturers of paper-folders, snuff-boxes, cigar-cases, and other trifles, such as travelling "'Arry" delights to secure for exhibition in his cabinet of "curiosities."

Happily Inismurray has not as yet become a fashionable show-place, and in modern times, at least, the cross-inscribed or lettered monuments would seem as a rule to have remained unharmed except by the rude hands of excise officers, or the trampling of cattle.¹

¹ The Board of Works, after restoring (?) the cashel and its edifices, erected no gate to prevent cattle or pigs from straying into the interior, and roving through

the graveyard, so the islanders, to meet the difficulty, have stopped up the entrance by blocking it with several cross-inscribed flagstones !—W. M.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

At *Reilic-Odrain* our round of the island must terminate. A walk of a few minutes would bring us to the station of Ollamurray, at which point our short but interesting itinerary commenced. All has been described except one small altar, situated to the north-east of the cashel, about midway between it and *Teernaneane* on the brink of the Atlantic. (See map, p. 1.) The pile is now nameless; and as the stones of which it is composed are much disturbed, further description of the ruin will not be necessary.

Before finally closing this notice of Inismurray, I would venture to call attention to a pair of quern-stones, which, at the time of my last visit to the place, lay by the side of a rude pathway, leading from *Reilic-Odrain* to the cashel. They would, doubtless, be readily pointed out to visitors by any of the natives. These stones represent the oldest kind of mill known in the world. They have been used in the far East from time immemorial, and are even mentioned in Holy Scripture. "Two women shall be grinding at a mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left." *Bro* is the name by which these Old-World machines are, or rather were, known in Ireland, where they have been discovered in connexion with the earliest human habitations—in natural caves, souterrains, lisses, crannogs, and often in the immediate neighbourhood of our oldest churches. They were used by the Irish all through the middle ages, and were not uncommon in the wilder districts, even down almost to our own times. The Inismurray example is probably the latest hand-mill of its class produced in Ireland, having been made only some eighteen years ago, for purposes in connexion with the manufacture of poteen. The upper stone measures one foot ten inches in diameter, and the orifice through which the grain was poured, to send it in contact with the nether stone, four inches and a quarter.

A generally-received tradition prevails amongst the people of western Sligo, that St. Molaise, besides his chief monastery on Inismurray, possessed establishments

situate in various districts of the neighbouring mainland. Of these, probably the most important was the Abbey of Staad, some remains of which occupy a position close to the Atlantic shore, in the townland of Agharrow, not far from Streedagh Point. The ruins mainly consist of portions of a church, or chapel, which was of an oblong form, and measured internally thirty-four feet in length, by fourteen feet five inches in breadth. The walls, which vary in height from ten feet eight inches to three feet, are at the base three feet in thickness. The masonry consists of rather small stones rudely laid; and plenty of shell mortar has been used. At the eastern end are the jambs of a window, which had been on the inside four feet eleven inches in height, its external breadth being six inches, with an inward splay to the extent of three feet. At the south-eastern angle of the church, within the side wall, is a recess (perhaps a *piscina*) twenty-two inches broad, seventeen inches in height, and the same in depth. The doorway was probably in the south side-wall, but its position cannot now be traced. Altogether the building presents a very mediæval look; but as the ruin is encompassed by traces of a *mur*, it probably occupies the site of a much more ancient structure. The natives assert that this *Teampull* was built by St. Molaise for his own accommodation when weather-bound on his way back to the island. The enclosure is now only used for the interment of unbaptized children, though the church appears to have been formerly surrounded by a cemetery of the ordinary class.

From this spot a very fine view of Inismurray is obtainable, and a kind of creek, in the immediate vicinity, affording a little shelter, is still often used as a point for landing, or embarkation, by the islanders.

Some notice of a second locality on the mainland, nearly opposite Inismurray, and associated with the name of St. Molaise, may fittingly be given here. I allude to *Tober Molaise*,—now called by the natives *Tubber Molash*, or the “Well of Molaise”—which lies on the slope of a hill, at a distance of about one hundred and fifty paces from the parish church of Ahamlish.

The well is a circular pool of small diameter, encompassed by a raised mound, through which, on the north-east side, is an opening with three steps leading to the water. An overflow from this spring fills two depressions in the ground extending in a direction nearly north. These may of old have been used as baths. The font is still held in veneration, and stations are occasionally performed at it by persons who have illness in their family, or whose cattle are "failing."

In other parts of the county Sligo there are wells dedicated to St. Molaise, but being at a considerable distance from the coast fronting Inismurray, a description of them will not be considered necessary for the completion of this Essay.

The commission which I had the honour of receiving from the Executive of our Association to produce this Monograph is now, to the best of my ability, fulfilled; but, before laying down the pen, I would beg in the first place to acknowledge my obligations to Richard Jones, Esq., of Streedagh House, Grange, county Sligo, for the kindness with which he placed his fine sea-going craft at my disposal whenever I found it necessary to visit Inismurray. I have also to thank Mr. Jones for his introduction to the people of the island, by which their cordial good-will was secured to me.

To Colonel Cooper, of Markree Castle, Collooney, I am indebted for the use of a considerable number of illustrations of the antiquities of Inismurray. These drawings—made by myself for Colonel Cooper, and forming portion of his magnificent collection of antiquarian matter relating to Ireland in general, and to the county Sligo in particular—were most liberally allowed by their owner to be reproduced, by the Dallastype process, for the purposes of this work.

To Colonel Wood-Martin I owe warm thanks for his kindness in supplying not a few measurements and rubbings, which were as useful as they were well and carefully executed.

It may not be out of place here to remark that his identification of Inismurray with *Inis-na-lainne*, the scene of the holocaust of 1027 or 1029 A.D., would appear, all

things considered, to be amply warranted. It is certain that several islands on the coast of Ireland, upon their occupation by a Christian community, received, from writers of ecclesiastical history, new names. For instance, Tory Island, off Donegal, was, as far as we can learn, originally called *Tor-Inis-Conaing*, the "Island of Conaing's Tower." This name, in early Christian times, was changed to *Tor-Inis-Martain*, from St. Martin, a friend and companion of St. Patrick, who there established a monastery, which appears to have been re-founded by St. Columba *circa* 545 A.D. In like manner, *Inis-Ereann*, off Howth, now known as "Ireland's Eye," became *Inis-mac-Nessan*, from the three sons of Nessan, viz., Dicholla, Munissa, and Nadsluagh, who some time in the seventh century erected a church upon it.

Of the native islanders to whom I owe acknowledgments for services performed, Michael Waters is my principal creditor. He well knows all the old stones of Inismurray; and as a guide, or an assistant, he would be invaluable to any visitor desirous of taking rubbings.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

TEACH-AN-ALAIS. (PAGE 37.)

The use of the hot-air bath in Ireland, to which Mr. Wakeman was here the first to direct public attention, has since received much further illustration in the pages of the Society's *Journal*. A Paper from Mr. Milligan appears at pp. 268-70 of the *Journal* for 1889, with an illustration of a primitive hut similar to that at p. 38. Mr. Milligan has shown that similar buildings are common in Ulster. He visited an example at Legeehan, near Blacklion, county Cavan (which he illustrates); another at Pomeroy, county Tyrone; another at Maghera, county Down; and the existence of many others was reported to him. In Down and Tyrone these bath chambers were used half a century ago, while in county Cavan and some neighbouring districts their use still survives, especially among the Irish-speaking country people, as a cure for rheumatism. When about to be used, a great fire of turf or brushwood was made inside; when this had burned out the ashes were swept out, and the patients took their place crouched on sods of turf. In several cases the bath-house had adjoining it a deep artificial pool, in which after the hot-air bath the patient took a plunge.

In the *Journal* for 1890, p. 165, Mr. Wakeman, referring to Mr. Milligan's Paper, says: "In the immediate vicinity of the latter (Inismurray, Teach-an-alais) occurs a large and deeply-sunk well, covered by a bee-hive-shaped dome; here it is probable patients, after an experience of the hot-air bath, enjoyed the customary refrigerating plunge."

In a Paper contributed to the *Journal*, 1891, p. 589, Rev. D. B. Mulcahy, P.P., describes a similar bath-house in Rathlin, where the name has the form *tiġ palluip* (*house of sweat*). There were in all four such places on the island of Rathlin. They are not now used there, but were formerly in demand not only as a cure for rheumatism, but as a means for improving the complexion of the island belles.

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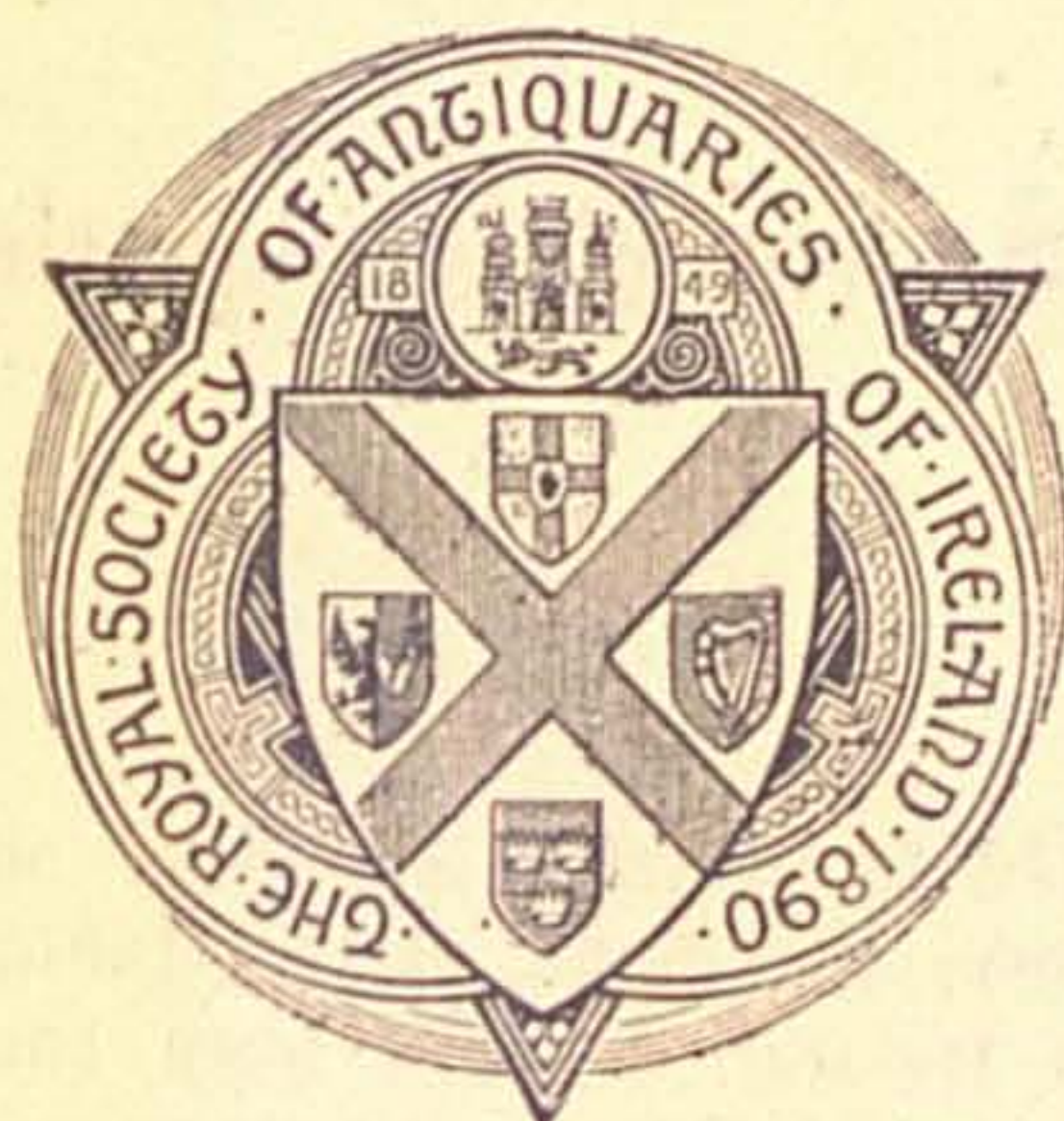
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