ACCOUNT

OF A

STONE WITH A RUNIC INSCRIPTION,

PRESENTED TO THE SOCIETY BY THE LATE

SIR ALEXANDER SETON OF PRESTON,

AND OF

SOME OTHER INSCRIPTIONS OF THE SAME KIND IN THE
ISLE OF MAN.

Several Runic inscriptions having been communicated to the Society, it seems proper to give an account of them in one article, as one may help to illustrate another.

The first that falls to be noticed, is on the stone presented to the Society a number of years ago by Sir Alexander Seton, and now set up on the north side of the Castle Hill, of which a drawing is given (Pl. xvi.) It was brought from Sweden, having been situated originally on a piece of ground called Little Ramsin garde
(or croft) in Witting parish, in Westmanland. It is of granite; and the inscription is sufficiently clear, shewing that it was a sepulchral monument, as is the case with most other Runic stones that have been found.

In like manner, as in most Runic stones, there is engraved upon it the body of a serpent, which serves as a line for the inscription (No. 1. of Pl. xvi.) The words are,—*Ari rasti stain aftir Hialm fadur sin. Guth hialbi ant hans;* i.e. Ari engraved this stone in memory of Hialm his father. God help his soul!

The first letter of the word *Hialm* has the upper part broken away; but, upon a close examination, the remaining part of that letter appears to be the lower part of an *h*, as it has the remains of the two diagonal cross lines, which are proper to that letter.

In the centre there is a figure resembling a Maltese cross or star; and also at the top appear the remains of the figure of a cross; proving that the stone is later in date than the introduction of Christianity into Scandinavia, which was not before the tenth century. If it should be called a Maltese cross, that would make the stone still more modern.

On one side of the stone, there is another figure represented on the plate, the meaning of which is not understood.

To the above may be added some Runic inscriptions, which appear on monumental stones in the Isle of Man. Two of these were communicated to the Society by Mr Henry Robert Oswald, surgeon at Douglas, Isle of Man, in a letter to Dr Jamieson, dated the 31st January 1817. "The first (Mr Oswald says) is "cut on the edges of a pillar of slate stone at the gate of the
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"church of Kirkmichael. The flat sides of the pillar are covered
with hieroglyphical images of men and horses, wild beasts, and
"warlike instruments."

The inscription, as given by Mr Oswald, is copied in No. 2, and
is read thus:—Ivalfir sunr Thurulfs ains rauda risti krus thon o aft
Fridu mudur sino; i.e. Ivalfir, son of Thurulf the Red, carved this
cross in memory of Fridu his mother.

At the end of the border, which contains the inscription, there
is the figure of a man holding a spear in his hand, and a shield on
the other arm.

The next Runic inscription communicated by Mr Oswald, is
described by him thus:—This inscription is upon one of the
faces of a square-sided pillar in Kirkbradden Church-yard. Some
figures are also to be seen upon this stone." See No. 3, where
it is read thus,—Thurlior Neaki risti krus thono aft Fiakr sun ru-
thur sun easo—— This is by no means clear, nor can a satisfac-
tory explanation be given of it. It seems to have been equally
obscure above a hundred years ago, when copied for Gibson's
edition of Camden's Britannia, where it stands thus, p. 1458,
(No. 4.) Thurlior neaki risti krus thono aft Fiak, sun sin aruthur
sun easo—— i.e. Thurlior Neaki engraved this cross in
memory of Fiak his son.— The rest has not been inter-
terpreted, and is probably erroneously copied, owing to the stone being
damaged or worn.

This, as well as the former inscription, is represented in Gough's
dition of the Britannia, vol. iv. p. 510; but the copies there are
not better, perhaps not so correct as in Gibson.

In Gough's edition, the last six words are read, Fiak sun sin
frudur sun safrsagh; which, written in the Runcie character, would
appear as in the second line of No. 5. of the plate. But still this
reading does not admit of a satisfactory interpretation.

The plate shews there are other indistinct marks at the end of
the inscription; and perhaps the person who copied it may have
mis-read some of the letters. If the word fruthur is the right
reading, the fi, having two strokes to the right, has been mis-
taken for o, or broad a, which has two strokes to the left of the
upright stalk common to all the Runic characters. But this sug-
gests the probability that fruthur is a mistake for bruthur, a word
that frequently occurs. However, none of these conjectural
emendations enable us to give a clear interpretation.

If we were clear of this difficulty, still the unknown word safr-
sagh would present another. That word does not agree with Mr
Oswald's copy; and we must, in the meantime, be content to im-
pute the obscurity to the inscription being damaged by time and
the weather.

There are other two inscriptions represented in both Gibson's
and Gough's editions of the Britannia (No. 6, 7.) I know not
whether these stones are still preserved, not having seen or heard
of them while I was in the island. The first inscription, No. 6-
is imperfect, the stone being broken, and said to be built into
the wall of the church of Kirkmichael. As far as legible, it runs
thus:—Laifa fiutra Guthan than son ilan..............................
.............a rasti krus thana aftar Malmuir fiutra sina Toirluf Kat-
skona as a. Fustra signifies a foster-son or daughter; and the
inscription seems intended to commemorate that the stone was
set up by, or in memory of, such a relation. This inscription is
No. 1. of Gibson's edition, p. 1458.
The other inscription is No. 4. of Gibson’s edition, p. 1458, and reads thus:—

Sontulf ainn svartt ræisti krus thono aeft Arin Oianiuf Kuana sina; i.e. Sontulf the Black engraved this stone in memory of Arin Oianiuf his wife. This is sufficiently clear except the word Oianiuf.

The following remarks on the inscriptions No. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are by the Reverend Dr Jamieson.

Both these inscriptions are given by Gough in his Additions to Camden’s Britannia, vol. iv. p. 510. The first, as here exhibited, agrees almost exactly with the plate in Camden.

Mr Beauford of Athy, in Ireland, has read it thus: Ivalfir sunr Dural fas sins randa risti crus Afrinde mudur sino; rendering it, For the sins of Ivalfir, the son of Dural, this cross was erected by his mother Afrinde.

Another translation has been given as that of Sir John Prestwick ( Beauties of England, p. 286, 287), Walter son of Thurulf, a knight right valiant, Lord of Frithu, the father, Jesus Christ. The literal version seems to be—Jualfir the son of Durulf, also the Red, erected this cross in memory of Fridu, or Fridu, his mother.

The language is the old Norwegian, or Norse, which is now most purely preserved in the Icelandic.

Thurulf is, according to the Icelandic, the genitive of Thurulf, or Thrulfr, like haff, the genitive of haff, pelagus, the sea; vide Run. Ion. Gramm. p. 11, 12. The proper name Thurulf seems to be compounded of Thor, or Thur, the name of one of the Scandinavian Deities, and Ulf, or Ulf, lupus—i.e. the Wolf of Thor.

Ein is used as the genitive of the Icelandic Ein, unus, unicus. But here it cannot signify only, as might appear at first view, because it does not agree with Sunr, filius, which is in the nominative; therefore we cannot render it, the only son of Durulf. It is also used in the sense of similiter, likewise; and in this signification it may either refer to the term Rauda as a sort of surname, or sobriet, given to Jualfir from his complexion, also called the Red; or it may be conjoined with this as the proper name of another person, perhaps the workman who engraved the stone. It appears from Wormius Monumenta Danica, that the name of the person thus employed was frequently added to that of him who was at the expense of the monument.

Risti literally signifies secavit, incidit, from Icelandic rista, scindere; literas runicas in ligno exarare; Haldorson Lex. Riathi, says Wormius, de Sculptore dictur; Monum. p. 254.

Crus is undoubtedly for cross. It occurs very often in the Danish inscriptions. The letter, which occurs here, is rendered K in the account given by Junius, prefixed to his Gothic Glossary. 18. Astle, in his Origin and Progress of Writing, gives it as corresponding to Roman C.

Thono is the same with Icel. thann, the accusative of these, hiece. Run. Ion. p. 62. I have not met with thono in the Monumenta Danica, but it appears in the form of Dena, p. 509, 510; of deni, p. 497; and of dina, p. 501. Thus it has been greatly varied in form, according to the province or the humour of the inscriber, if not the ignorance of the workman.

Aft or eft is found in a great many Danish inscriptions as literally signifying after; metaphorically, in memory of; as in Wormius, Monum. p. 485. Nicholas Tuulf gru raru eft fudur;—
Nicolas Tailn cut these runes, in memoriam patris. Thorgud rist dena eft Thrundo sun sin;—Thorgud erected this stone in memory of Throndo, his son; p. 510. Eftir is also frequently used in the same sense; as p. 496, Dolaf Siaia sun raisti stain aftir Alaf; “Dolaf, the son of Siaia, erected this stone to Olave.”

Fridur is a proper name for a woman, still common in Iceland; probably from Frid-r, formosus. Vide Haldorson.

How Sir John Prestwick could found his translation, it is not easy to conjecture. It must have been merely guess-work. The first word cannot be rendered Walter; but this was more modern than Jualfir. And he seems to have adhered to the same rule of interpretation; for he has rendered Eins rauda risti crus, a knight right valiant. Had he been a Scotchman, on the same principle of translating the Norse by the words which it most nearly resembled in his own language, he would certainly have read, one royster richt crous. Had he seemed to have viewed as a contraction for Domino, although the construction might present some difficulty. He was, however, determined to find out a lordship for his brother knight; and he accordingly makes him Lord of Frithu. The mode in which he has translated Mudur and Sino, plainly signifying his mother, throws a bar in the way of ridicule. Sino he had most probably viewed as equivalent to filia.

The version given by Mr Beauford is not quite so absurd. It savours, however, of the same propensity to assimilate to our own language; for, besides a variety of other deviations from the reading as given in the plate, in order to find out the guilt of Jualfir, for which the erection of this stone is supposed to have been an atonement, he has converted eins into sino. He has also made his good mother, to whom he meant to do honour, do penance for him.

There is less agreement between the copy of the second Runic inscription transmitted to me and that given by Gough.

Durliorneit appears in the former as if one word; but, in Gough’s, the marks of separation are inserted after Durlior, and what follows may be read neaki. Mr Beauford reads the whole inscription thus: Durlfr nsaci risti crus dono Aftsiac sun sin Fridur sun Siaia: rendering it, For Admiral Durlif this cross was erected by the son of his brother, the son of Siaia; Camden, iv. 510. The name, in the copy of the inscription which accompanies this version, as well as in that now exhibited, is unquestionably Durlior. That the initial word terminates in this manner is most probable. In Gough’s copy, the semicolon is subjoined to r.—Nsaci cannot be the true reading, as it does not admit of being pronounced. Mr Beauford has read the following letter as denoting s. But I find no proof of its being ever thus used. According to Wormius and Junius, it is e. The next letter has the same power, though different in form. According to the copy sent to me, the word would be neaki; but if it be read as Mr Gough gives it, we have neaki. It certainly required as much ingenuity to discover an admiral here, as for Sir John Prestwick to convert the term Rauda into a Knight. Sir John had something more like reason on his side, as he perhaps thought of Danish Ridder, which denotes a knight. But as I can find neither, I shall offer no conjecture whatsoever as to the meaning; especially as the true reading seems uncertain.

Aftsiac appears as if one word in the copy sent from Man; but
in the engraving given by Gough, the mark of distinction intervenes between \( \text{aft} \) and \( \text{fieq} \). It must be observed, however, that, according to Gough's transcript, \( \text{Fieq} \) is the reading, the final letter being \( C \) or \( K \), not \( F \). Mr Beauford has improperly conjoined the words. But there can be no reasonable doubt, that they had at any rate been originally meant as distinct, from the frequent use, as has been already seen, of \( \text{aft} \), as signifying in memory of the person whose name is subjoined. Instead of reading “For Durlifis, this cross was erected by his son,” &c. we must certainly render it, “Durlior erected this cross in memory of Fief, or \( \text{Fieq} \), the son,” &c. What appears as \( \text{sr na runar} \) in my copy, is, according to Gough, \( \text{Sunsin outruth} \), for \( \text{brothur} \), probably by an error of the workman, who had made \( s \) instead of \( b \). Thus the meaning would be, the son of his brother. Mr Beauford, as he before, by mistake a for e, reads \( \text{naisc} \), here substitutes \( \text{sufrag} \), for what, according to Gough, is \( \text{Eaorsh} \), and in the latter transcript \( \text{Eaorsh} \). In Gough's \( \text{fac-simile} \) several abbreviations are added, which do not appear in the copy transmitted.

Two other inscriptions found in the Isle of Man have also been communicated by Mr Oswald. He gives the following account of the first of these.

"Inscription upon a whinstone which was found about 40 years ago, six feet under the surface, when the foundation of the present church of St Ann, or Santon parish was laid. The stone is rough, in its natural state. The characters are strongly marked with some rude instrument. There is a burying-ground all round the church, and several Druidical tumuli in the neighbouhood."

On this inscription Dr Jamieson makes the following observations:

"In regard to the inscription on a whinstone found on laying the foundation of the present church of St Ann, it seems evident that \( N \) is a combination of \( AV \), and that \( \text{==} \) is the contraction for \( UM \). Thus, I read it as barbarous Latin for AVITUM MONUMENTUM, signifying the monument or tomb belonging to ancestors. The characters seem pretty nearly to resemble the old Teutonic, as given by Astle, Tab. i. page 64. The initial \( M \) in \( \text{monumentum} \) has the precise form of that of the specimen of Roman uncial which he gives from a most ancient copy of the Four Gospels preserved in the Harleian Library; vide Tab. xi. p. 84. This M.S. is, he says with great reason, asserted to have been written in Italy above eleven hundred years ago. The form of this inscription had most probably been furnished by some Latin priest."

The other inscription, communicated by Mr Oswald, he describes as follows:

"This inscription is cut upon a stone, somewhat like an altar or pedestal to a statue. It is mutilated. It lies at Castleton, and is said to have been brought from Cumberland to this island; but this is uncertain. No distinct trace of the Romans is anywhere else to be seen in the country."

I have examined this stone; and it appears to be a Roman altar similar to many found in Britain. That it came from thence is a probable supposition, since we are nowhere informed that the Romans ever occupied the island; and it has hitherto afforded no other monument of that people.

I was told that it was found in digging a foundation for the
Governor's house in Castle Rushin. It has suffered damage, by which some letters are obliterated; and, having copied the inscription without having seen any other copy whatever, I find that mine differs in some respects from Mr Oswald's.

The third line seems to be an improved reading, since MF combined in one character may very properly be read Marcilius; and the remainder of that line I would read Filii, or filii Voltiniae.

ELENSIS, in the fifth line, I have read ETENSIS, having nothing but the stone before me, though I do not pretend to guess of what word either of these fragments may have made a part. Many corps of the Roman army had names ending with the syllables —etenses, or —tenses. In the Notitia Imperii, among the Legiones Comitatenses, sub dispositione viri illustris magistri militum per Thracias, there are mentioned Divitenses Gallicani, Augustenses, &c. The next word in the same line I have read Pref. for Prefectus. The sixth line, which immediately follows, has in the beginning a chasm, ending with VS, where Mr Oswald has IB, which is not easily referred to any word I know: But as COH. T...... follows, it leads one to suppose that the preceding word might be Prefectus, denoting the chief officer of a cohort. The remainder of the word which began with T being lost, we may conjecture that it was Tungrorum, of which name several corps are mentioned in the Notitia, and the name frequently occurs in such inscriptions. The beginning of the next line, which is indistinct, may have been the end of this word. There are two provinces of Narbonne in Gaul; and the word here probably describes the country of the person who erected this altar.

Any one who will take the trouble of examining the stone itself, which stands at Castle Rushin, will be enabled to judge with more certainty which of the copies is most accurate. The obscurity arises from the face of the stone being chipped or broken.