

ALABASTER RELIQUARY FOUND IN CALDEY ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE, WITH NOTICES OF AN OBJECT OF THE LIKE DESCRIPTION EXISTING IN ANGLESEY.

THE coasts of South Wales, the island refuges also with which its rocky sea-board is so thickly margined, abound in vestiges of the earliest times when Christianity was introduced into that remote district of Cambria. It has been observed by the historian of Pembrokeshire, in noticing the conventual establishments of Tenby and its vicinity, and the ancient reputation of that town for sanctity, that every insulated rock off the coast had its cell and its anchorite.¹ If we survey the rugged shores, from St. Bride's Bay and the site of the Roman *Menevia*, we cannot fail to notice the frequent occurrence of sites hallowed by ancient tradition,—Ramsey Island, the resting-place of the missionary Devanus in the second century ; the ruined chapels of St. Nun and St. Justinian ; Capel y Pistill at Porthclais, the birth-place of St. David, and the Holy Well in which he received baptism ; St. Ishmael's, the reputed refuge of the anchorite Caradoc ; the curious hermitage also and healing Well of St. Govan, with numerous other sites renowned in the legends of Welsh hagiography.

As we approach the picturesque old town of Tenby, the peninsular reef of rocks presents itself, on which traces may be discerned of the chapel of St. Catherine ; to the southward are the islands of Caldey and St. Margaret's, or Little Caldey, about a mile from the shore. On the latter still exist remains of a chapel of considerable size ; whilst in Caldey, an island formerly fertile in corn and containing a population of thirty families, there are ruins of a conventual church and establishment of some importance,—the square tower, with a spire of stone, the nave, chancel, and other portions of the devastated fabric are to be seen, forming a picturesque object, with the vaulted refectory, as supposed,

¹ Fenton, Hist. Tour through Pembrokeshire, p. 437.

and venerable relics of a structure that appears to have been, doubtless for security on so perilous a coast, semi-castellated and embattled. The greater part was considered by Mr. Fenton to be of the age of the first monastic pile. The church, I regret to state, has been used in recent times as a brewhouse. There is also, near the road of approach from the beach, an ancient chapel, probably the same noticed in 1478 by William of Worcester, as dedicated to St. Mary, and in which, as stated by Mr. Fenton, there stood, not long before his visit to the spot with Sir Richard Colt Hoare, a baptismal font.²

The Priory of Caldey was a cell to the abbey of St. Dogmael in Pembrokeshire, a monastery of the Order of Tiron, or reformed Benedictines, instituted by St. Bernard early in the twelfth century. The first foundation has been attributed to Martin de Turribus, by whom the country of Cemaes was subdued about the time of the Conqueror; it was endowed by his son Robert Fitz Martin, whose charter was confirmed by Henry I. and his queen Adeliza, and is recited in the confirmation by Edward III. Amongst possessions enumerated by Robert Fitz Martin occurs the following:—*“Dedit denique eisdem monachis mater mea insulam Pyr, quæ alio nomine Caldea nuncupatur, quam a domino meo rege michi datam matri meæ dederam, quod utique libens concedo.”* Dugdale, *Mon. Ang.*, vol. iv., p. 128; edit. Caley.

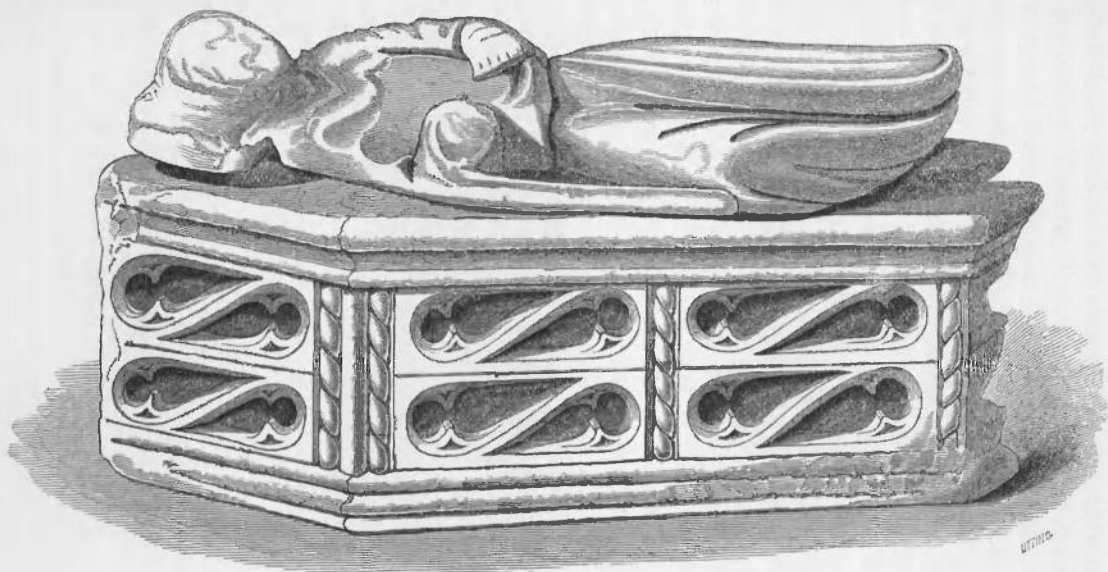
This ancient name of Caldey, it may here be observed, has been traced to Pyrrus, possibly a king of Britain, successor of Sawl Benuchel, according to the Welsh genealogists.³ Giraldus Cambrensis, who was born about 1146 at the castle of Manorbier, thus notices his birth-place:—*“Distat a Penbrochiæ castro quasi milliaribus tribus castellum quod Maenor Pyrr, id est mansio Pyrr, dicitur; qui et insulam Chaldei habebat, quam Cambri Ynys Pyrr, id est insulam Pyrr vocant.”*⁴ Sir Richard Colt Hoare observed, in his notes on

² *Ibid.*, p. 459. The notice of Caldey in the Itinerary of William of Worcester, edit. Nasmith, p. 155, is as follows:—*“Insula Caldey sequitur proxima Shepey-land”* (described as near Scopeholm in Milford Haven) *“coram villa Tynbye per unum miliare; continet in longitudine i. miliare, et in latitudine dimidium miliaris, et est circa xxx. domos populates, et unum turrim, et cum capella sanctæ Mariæ super maris litus . . . ac ecclesia*

prioratus de Caldey fundata cum amasia sua.” About 1600, in the time of George Owen, the Pembrokeshire antiquary, lord of Cemaes, the inhabitants had decreased, and were eight or ten households only. Owen's *Hist. of Pembrokeshire*, Camb. Reg., vol. ii., p. 127. They durst not keep oxen for fear of pirates.

³ *Myv. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 165.

⁴ *Itin. Cambr.*, lib. i. c. xii. edit. Camden, Anglica, &c., p. 851.



Alabaster reliquary found in the Isle of Caldey, Pembrokeshire.
In possession of Edward Kynaston Bridger, Esq.
From a drawing by Edward Blore, Esq., F.S.A.

Giraldus:—"Our author has given a very classical, and, I think, far-fetched etymology to this castle and the adjoining island in calling them the Mansion and Island of Pyrrhus; a much more natural and congenial conjecture may be made in supposing Maenor Pyrr to be derived from Maenor, a manor, and Pyrr, the plural of Por, a lord, the manor of the lords, and consequently Inys Pyrr, the Island of the Lords."⁵ It has been likewise mentioned by Leland, as follows:—"Mainopir, i.e. Mansio Pirrhi, is now commonly cawlded *Manober*, a Towne of howsbondry. The ruines of *Pirrhus* Castel there, many walles yet standyng hole, do openly appere and agaynst this Towne, or betwixt yt and *Tinby*, lyith *Inispir*, i.e. *Insula Pirrhi*, alias *Caldey*."⁶

I proceed to notice an object of somewhat unusual fashion, an alabaster reliquary,⁷ found some years ago in the Isle of Caldey under remarkable circumstances, and brought before the Institute early in the last year, 1868, through the friendly suggestion of the Rev. J. Bathurst Deane, by Mr. Edward Kynaston Bridger, the present possessor of the island, and to whom the object in question belongs. I am indebted to him for the following particulars regarding the discovery. He was not, however, present on the occasion, but received the account from his cousin, the late Mr. Corbet Kynaston. That gentleman, formerly proprietor of Caldey, was hunting a wild cat that took refuge in a cavern in the face of the cliff overhanging the sea, on the side of the island which faces Tenby, not such a cavity as could possibly have served as an anchorite's cell, but merely a large hole in the rock. He proceeded to dig out the animal, and in this operation he threw out with the loose soil the little reliquary. When thus found it was in the damaged condition in which it is now seen, but there was much color remaining on the surface; this decoration was unfortunately washed off, some years subsequently, by an over zealous housemaid. On the death of Mr. Kynaston, in 1867, this curious relic came into

⁵ Giraldus Cambr., vol. i. pp. 201, 204.

⁶ Leland, Itin., vol. v. f. 26. See also f. 75.

⁷ Carta 5 Edw. III. per Inspex., printed in Dugdale, Mon., vol. iv. edit. Caley, p. 130. Leland states that "the chauntor (*precentor*) of St. David's tolde me that one Martinus de Turribus, a Norman, wan the country of Kemmeys in Wales, about

the time of king William the Conqueror, and that this Martinus foundid the Abbey of St. Dogmael in Kemeis, and that he lyith buried in the quier there." Itin., vol. iv. p. 28; Collect., vol. i. p. 96. See also Fenton, in his notices of St. Dogmaels. The cell in Caldey is mentioned by Leland as "now suppressid." Itin., vol. v. p. 14.

the possession of his cousin. The cavern where it had been concealed has long since disappeared, the cliff at that spot having been quarried to procure the limestone of which it is composed.

There can be little doubt that the sculptured object thus found in the cavern on the coast of Caldey had been originally connected with some hallowed use, and that it may have appertained either to the church of the Tironian monks, or to one of the chapels that existed in the little island. It is probable that at the suppression of monasteries, or on the peremptory abolition of all church appliances designated superstitious, this alabaster shrine had been concealed in the hiding-hole where, by so singular a chance, it was at length brought again to light.⁸

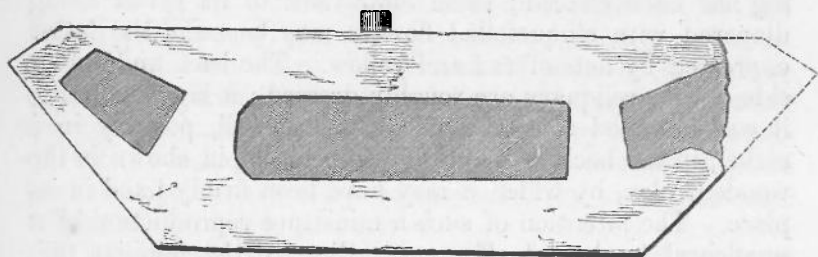
It is remarkable that, in so small an island, there were no less than three places devoted to Christian worship. Besides the more important fabric, the conventual church, there was the chapel, to which Mr. Fenton has alluded, situated, as I am informed by Mr. Bridger, about half way between the beach and the monastery. The walls only remained in the time of the late owner, by whom they were employed in the erection of a chapel and schoolroom for the use of the inhabitants. Mr. Bridger remarks that the original building, in which, as Mr. Fenton informs us, a font formerly was to be seen, may possibly have been a baptismal chapel, as suggested by that circumstance. There is, however, no spring of water near it, the only spring being that in the monastery in the centre of the island. The ground surrounding the little structure had been used for sepulture, human remains being abundantly found there. The site of another chapel, according to the same obliging information, is found on the south-eastern extremity of the island, where the lighthouse now stands.

The design of the alabaster object brought before the Institute by Mr. Bridger appears, as will be seen by the accompanying representation, for which we are indebted to

⁸ Caldey now abounds with rabbits. The wild cat and sundry like vermin seem in former days to have multiplied in the islands along the shores of the Principality. William of Worcester, writing of the "*Insula de Meulx*," the Mouse Islands on the north side of Anglesey,

mentions also the "*Insula Lastydwale*," as over run by such doleful creatures. "*Non est populata nisi silvestres herbas, aves vocate mewys, kermertes, et katones, et muscæ, id est mowses.*" Itin., edit. Nasmith, p. 154.

the constant kindness of Mr. Blore, to have been suggested by the fashion of the mediæval table-tomb and recumbent effigy.⁹ The base, or tomb, consists of an irregular four-sided piece of alabaster, the ends being beveled off so as to present a three-sided front, divided into four panels or compartments by upright mouldings partly worked with spiral ornament; each compartment is pierced with tracery of somewhat flamboyant character. There are traces of yellow color or gilding on the spiral mouldings or shafts that separate these compartments. The date may be assigned



Plan of Alabaster Reliquary found in Caldey Island. Orig. length, when perfect, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, breadth 24 inches.

approximately to the latter half of the fifteenth century. The dimensions of the base were, in its perfect state, about 8 in. by $2\frac{1}{4}$ in height and breadth; some portions, one end especially, have been cut and broken away. Within the thickness of this base there are three cavities roughly cut; that in the centre measures about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. by five-eighths, the depth of the cavity being $2\frac{1}{3}$ in. The other two cavities, one at each end of the base, are much smaller. The pierced openings already described open into these interior receptacles, as if to afford means of inspecting some relic or other object therein enclosed. For such a purpose, however, the small size of the openings through the thick front of the object seems ill adapted. Upon a separate piece of alabaster, that serves as a covering or lid to this base, is sculptured a recumbent effigy, apparently of a female; in its present

⁹ This object had been exhibited by Mrs. Gwynne at the Annual Meeting of the Cambrian Archæological Association at Tenby, in 1851. Arch. Camb., new

series, vol. ii. p. 340. It was brought before the Institute at the monthly meeting in February, 1868, as noticed in this Journal, vol. xxv. p. 166.

defaced and imperfect condition it is scarcely possible to ascertain what may have been the action of the figure, the position of the hands and other details of the design ; the head has suffered much, the hands and feet are wholly lost ; the right knee is raised ; the intention seems to have been to represent a person reclining on her left side or slightly turning outwards, that is towards the spectator. It is probable that there was a kerchief or hood thrown over the head, and here traces of red and of green color may be discerned. The loosely draped robe with wide sleeves is girt low, just above the hips ; the mantle is shown on each side, its coloring has been effaced ; some indications of its green lining diapered with cinquefoiled flowers may be seen, the latter expressed by dots of red and yellow. The back and under side of this reliquary are roughly dressed ; it is evident that it was intended to be placed against a wall, possibly in a niche ; in the back is inserted a strong iron pin, shown in the woodcut plan, by which it may have been firmly fixed in its place. The intention of such a miniature reproduction of a sepulchral tomb and effigy, according to the familiar mediæval fashion, is by no means obvious. I am not aware that any of the minor appliances of sacred use amongst the varied forms of the reliquary, has been noticed, of such a type, especially accompanied by the mortuary adjunct of the recumbent effigy. The shrine, moreover—the *lipsanoteca*, or depository of hallowed relics, was commonly portable, not affixed to a wall or the like ; it was in fact a feretory, for the most part intended to be borne in processions or on other solemn occasions, and as such was one of the customary requisites for the furniture and ornaments of churches. The type of a *feretrum* is doubtless a coffin, those of most ancient form being simply the *cistula* or *capsa*, with a ridged top like a roof. In the present instance, the introduction of a recumbent effigy, as upon a tomb, in lieu of the usual ridged and crested covering of a shrine, is perhaps not material. It must be observed that the object, although it may be supposed to have been associated with some hallowed purpose, presents no distinctive indication of a sacred character ; the figure is unaccompanied by any saintly symbol ; it affords no clue to determine who may have been the person portrayed. The female costume and general aspect of the little effigy preclude the supposition that it

may have had any connexion with the only sainted personage, St. Dogmael, known as connected with the locality.¹ In default of any clue to its appropriation, the conjecture may appear by no means improbable that it may have been a memorial of the wife of the first Norman lord of Cemaes, Martin de Turribus, founder of St. Dogmael's Abbey.² By her gift, as we learn from the charter of her son to the monks of that religious house, before cited, they had been endowed with the island of Pyr, otherwise named Caldey. It has been suggested, not without probability, that the effigy may have been placed by the monks in much later times as a diminutive portraiture and memorial of the foundress. It may, moreover, deserve consideration that in several instances where the remains of persons eminent or venerated in their lifetime have been severed and distributed amongst monasteries and churches that they had endowed, or with which they had been specially associated, such partial deposits are often accompanied by memorials and effigies of diminutive proportions.

I have sought in vain for any other reliquary of precisely similar description, particularly as regards the incumbent effigy and obvious assimilation to the monumental memorials of the period. In the old church, however, of Llanidan, in Anglesey, there exists a little reliquary of stone that presents considerable analogy with that found in Caldey. It has been traditionally known as the Shrine of St. Nidan, or Aidan. Rowlands, the historian of Mona, who was Vicar of Llanidan, thus records its discovery there, in his *Collections for the Parochial Antiquities of the island*:—"Sub altari hic non ita pridem capsula lapidea reliquiis sacris onusta, cum aptato operculo ejusdem lapidis, cumque tribus ad latus ostiolis, desuper fornicatis, e cotariæ genere, blande et concinne formata, eruebatur, quæ jam omnibus visenda suo loco deposita est."³ Pennant, who visited Llanidan about 1780,

¹ St. Dogmael, Dogfael or Docmael, in Brittany called St. Toel, lived in Pembrokeshire, according to the legends, in the sixth century. He was son of Ithel ab Caredig; and has been accounted patron of several churches in Pembrokeshire, also of Llanddogwel in Anglesey. See Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 211; Butler, under June 14.

² The remains of the abbey on the banks of the Teify opposite Cardigan are

inconsiderable; they appear to show that the fabric was highly decorated and spacious. In the North transept there are two canopied recesses, in which, as appears by additions to Leland from Edward Lhwd's MSS., were formerly the effigies of the founder and of his son. See Fenton's account of the Abbey, *Tour in Pembrokeshire*, p. 512.

³ The Latin original of this valuable Supplement to his *Mona*, has been pub-

thus describes this object :—"In the church is a reliquary, made neither of gold nor silver, nor yet ornamented with precious stones, but of very ordinary gritstone, with a roof-like cover. Whether it contained any reliques of the patron saint, a St. Aiden, of whom the venerable Bede makes such honorable mention, I cannot say. The church of Durham possessed his cross, three of his teeth, his head, and two griffin's eggs."⁴

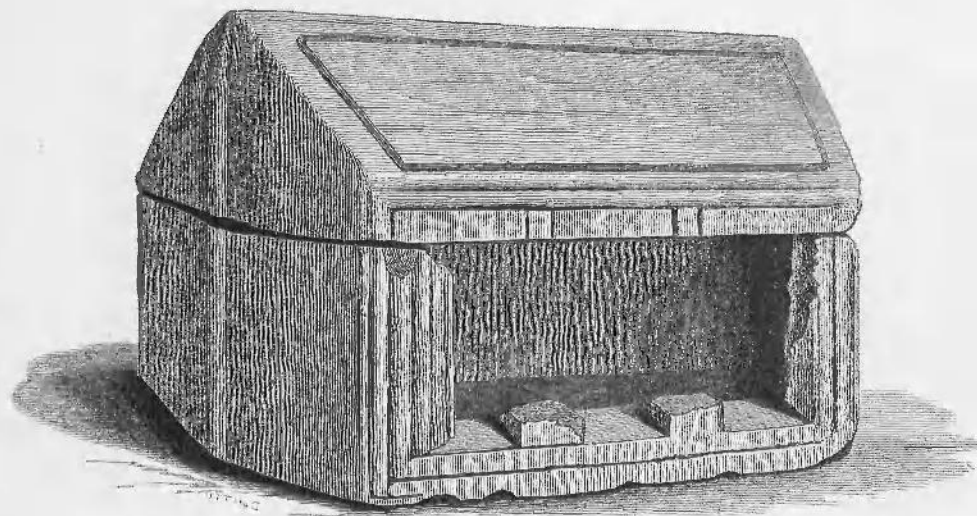
This stone *capsula* has been noticed by the Rev. H. Longueville Jones in his valuable series of memoirs published by the Cambrian Archæological Association, entitled "*Mona Mediævæ*"; it has also been figured in their Journal on a very small scale from a drawing supplied by Lord Boston, patron of the living, a zealous local antiquary.⁵ I am indebted to the skilful pencil of the Rev. W. Wynn Williams, of Menai-fron, whose knowledge of ancient remains in Anglesey has so frequently aided my enquiries, for the careful drawing reproduced in illustration of this memoir, and also for the following particulars, with a plan or section of the *capsula*. The dimensions are 26 in. in length; the height to the ridge of the lid is, on the left-hand end, 17 in., on the other end, 18½ in.; the breadth is 14 in. The bottom of the little chest measures 3½ in. in thickness; the lid, a solid piece of stone flat on its under side, is moveable; it fits closely to the lower portion, but the mouldings of the front, with the exception of the two outer ones on the left side, do not coincide, or rather they do not seem to have been continued upon the front of the lid, which appears as if it had not been finished. It is difficult indeed to determine the arrangement of the upper part; the mullions may have been carried up square to their junction with the lid. On the left end,

lished with an English translation in the *Archæologia Cambrensis* from the MS. in possession of the Rev. John Jones, of Llanllyfni, Caernarvonshire. The account of Llanidan may be found *Arch. Camb.*, vol. iii. p. 297. See also *Ang-harad Llwyd's Hist. of Anglesey*, p. 287; it is there stated from Edward Llwyd's notice in the Sebright MSS. that the small *osteotheca* found in Llanidan Church in Rowland's time lay about 2 ft. under the ground under the altar. It contained some pieces of bone.

⁴ *Tour in Wales*, vol. ii. p. 228.

⁵ *Arch. Camb.*, vol. i. p. 429; third

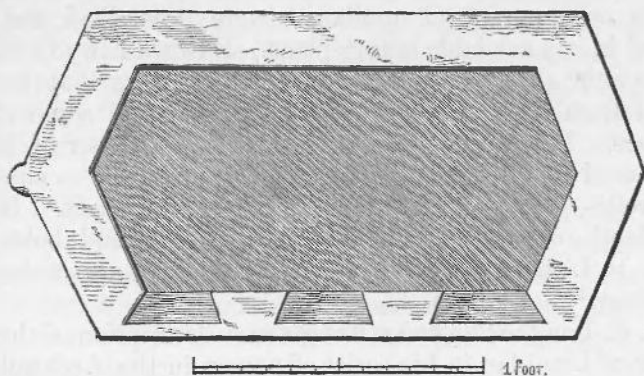
series, vol. ix. p. 260. During the Annual Meeting of the Association at Bangor in 1860, the ruined remains of the old church of Llanidan were visited, and they were then in a very neglected state; the curious font lay in a dark corner, in another was the reliquary above noticed, broken and exposed to further injuries. *Arch. Camb.*, third series, vol. vi. p. 366. It is satisfactory to be assured by Mr. Longueville Jones, that through the care and good taste of Lord Boston these remains are now protected in a more suitable manner.



Stone Reliquary in the Old Church of Llanidan, Anglesey.

From a Drawing by the Rev. W. Wynn Williams. (Length 26 inches, height about 18 inches.)

or gable, there is a moulding at the angle, but none at the other end. The material is a fine-grained sandstone of rather bright yellow color.



Plan of a Stone Reliquary, Llanidan, Anglesey. Orig. length 26 inches, breadth 14 inches.

It will be noticed that in the two reliquaries that have been described the general type is the same, each presenting a certain assimilation to a tomb, in one instance accompanied by an effigy, whilst the other has the customary coped covering commonly designated *à dos d'ane*. In each also the front is pierced with openings through which possibly the contents of the little chamber within might be discerned. This arrangement, it may here be observed, is of rare occurrence in the sepulchral depositories of the Middle Ages that resemble these reliquaries, with the exception for the most part of their larger dimensions. A remarkable example has recently been brought before us by Mr. Hewitt, namely, an altar-tomb at Newington-street in Kent, the side of which is formed with an arcade of four panels with trefoiled heads, one of these arched panels being open through the entire width of the tomb.⁶ I may mention also an altar-tomb in Salisbury Cathedral, the sides of which are perforated by a series of oval apertures, so that on either side the space beneath the covering slab is open. These are very exceptional examples, and the latter may possibly be regarded as a variety only of the open table-tomb, of which many exist, having for the most part a nude or skeleton

⁶ It is figured in this volume, p. 160, *ante*.

figure on the lower stage and the fully clad effigy recumbent above.

The Llanidan reliquary had doubtless been concealed under the altar in the sixteenth century, when so many church ornaments and appliances were proscribed, and deposited in any available hiding-place. Edward Llwyd's MSS., in the Sebright Collection, contain the answers that he received from Rowlands regarding Llanidan and some other parishes. It appears that the learned topographer of Mona considered this "*osteotheca*" to be a "creirgist," a chest to hold relics, pieces of bone having been found in it. It lay at a depth of two feet. He supposed that it had belonged either to Llanidan, to Clunnog, or Llanddwyn, parishes in Anglesey.⁷

Mr. H. Longueville Jones has given a description of the old church of Llanidan in his series of papers in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, before cited, entitled "*Mona Mediæva*."⁸ It was one of the most important churches in the island, interesting from its architectural features and the traditions connected with it. "In an evil hour," however, as that zealous antiquary informs us, it was ruthlessly condemned. In 1844 the demolition of the church, a small portion excepted, was carried out. Thus unfortunately has been almost wholly destroyed the venerable fabric of which the Historian of Mona, for many years incumbent of the parish, wrote so pleasantly:—"Ecclesia Sancti Aidani in loco maxime amæno prope mare sedet; fabrica quidem, præ antiquo construendi ritu, nec parca nec inelegans; cui nova, ducentis plus minus elapsis annis, ecclesia veteri intercolumniis unita adjecta est."⁹

It has been supposed by Pennant that the saint, under whose invocation the church of Llanidan was dedicated, may have been the Bishop of Lindisfarne, St. Aidan or Ædan, sent to King Oswald in the seventh century, as re-

⁷ Extracts cited by Angharad Llwyd, *Hist. of Anglesey*, p. 287.

⁸ *Arch. Camb.*, vol. i. p. 430; the discovery of the reliquary is noticed at p. 433, and in a supplementary memoir, *ibid.*, third series, vol. ix. p. 260, where it is figured on a very reduced scale, and somewhat inaccurately. The western portion of the church still stands, serving as a kind of mortuary chapel, in which may be found the Norman font, the

reliquary, with other objects; the cover of the curious little chest has been broken, probably through careless removal. The neglected condition of these remains when visited by the Cambrian Archæologists during their Bangor meeting in 1860 is related, *Arch. Camb.*, third series, vol. vi. p. 368.

⁹ Rowlands' *Antiquitates Parochiales*, *Arch. Cambr.* vol. iii. p. 296.

lated by Bede,¹ to preach the faith amongst the Anglo-Saxons of Northumberland. The Cambrian hagiographers, however, attribute the foundation of the church in Anglesey to St. Nidan, in the seventh century. He was Confessor to the College of Penmon in that island, and was commemorated on September 30.² Nidan was grandson of the celebrated warrior, Urien, who expelled the Gwyddelians in the latter part of the fifth century, and whose heroic deeds are celebrated by Llywarch Hên and Taliesin.³ The reliquary may, doubtless, have been the depository of certain bones of the founder of the church; but there is obviously no clue to the original intention of the object, which does not appear to bear the stamp of any very remote antiquity.

The parish of Llanidan contained an unusual number of early remains of remarkable "Druidical" character, that have been described by Rowlands.⁴ Some of them still exist, somewhat impaired by time and neglect. Of a few of the most interesting of these vestiges notices and representations may be found in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*. There was formerly also in the church a singular object associated with mysterious traditions. This was the "Maen Morddwyd"—the Thigh Stone. It is first mentioned by Giraldus de Barri, in the Itinerary of his Journey through Wales with Archbishop Baldwin, A.D. 1188. In the notice of their visit to Anglesey he states that at a certain place there existed a stone resembling a human thigh, preserving this innate virtue, that when transported to any distance it returned of its own accord. He adds, that when Hugh Lupus invaded North Wales, he attached this locomotive stone by chains to one of larger size, and flung it into the sea; but next morning it reappeared in its place; whereupon the Earl made proclamation that no one should presume again to remove it. Some sceptical rustic, moreover, tested the Maen Morddwyd, by fastening it to his own thigh, which forthwith became putrid, and the miraculous stone quickly

¹ Bede, *Hist. lib. iii., de Vita Cuthb.*, c. 4; Butler's *Lives of Saints*, under Aug. 31. There was also a saint Aidan, bishop of Mayo, occurring in the Irish calendar under Oct. 21. He died A.D. 768.

² Williams, *Biogr. Dict. of Eminent Welshmen*, p. 357; Rees, *Essay on the Welsh Saints*, p. 295. He was son of

Gwrywy, the son of Pasgen, son of Urien Dwynoel; Pedigrees in Rees' *Lives of the Cambro British Saints*; Welsh MSS. Soc., p. 596.

³ Williams, *ut supra*, p. 504; Myv. Arch.; Nennius.

⁴ *Mona Antiqua*, p. 87. See also Pennant, *Tour*, vol. ii. p. 229.

made its escape. The relation given by Giraldus of this strange popular tradition is as follows :—"Quoniam in hac insula digna memoratu multa reperies, quædam ex his excerpere et hic interserere non superfluum duxi. Est igitur hic lapis humanæ femori fere conformis, cui insita virtus hoc habet, ut spacio quantolibet asportatus proxima per se nocte revertatur, sicut ab accolis pluries est compertum. Unde et Hugo comes Cestrensis, qui tempore Regis Henrici primi tam insulam istam, quam terras adjacentes viriliter occupaverat, audita hujus lapidis virtute, ipsum alii lapidis longe majori ferreis catenis fortiter ligatum probandi causa procul in mari projici fecit : qui tamen summo diluculo cum multorum admiratione pristino more suo in loco repertus est. Cujus rei occasione publico comitis edicto prohibitum est, ne quis de cetero lapidem a loco movere presumat. Contigit aliquando rusticum quemdam experiendi gratia ad femur suum lapidem ligasse, sed putrefacto statim femore ad locum pristinum lapis evasit."⁵

The learned author of "Mona," who, as before stated, was Vicar of Llanidan about 1710, informs us that the "Maen Morddwyd" had been recently carried off by some unknown papist, its ancient virtue having apparently become exhausted and extinct. In the "Antiquitates Parochiales," recently published from Rowlands' MSS., the stone shrine or *capsula*, as already noticed, is described ; and we find also the singular folk-lore regarding the "thigh-stone" that had been preserved at the same place. Rowlands thus notices the latter :—"Hic etiam ille lapis lumbi, vulgo Maen Morddwyd, a Giraldo Cambrensi mire et copiose decantatus, in hujus cæmeterii vallo locum sibi a retro tempore obtinuit, exindeque his nuperis annis quo nescio papicola vel qua inscia manu (nulla ut olim renitente virtute quæ tunc penitus elanguit aut vetustate evaporavit) nullo sane loci dispendio, nec illi qui eripuit emolumento, ereptus et deportatus fuit."⁶

Camden, in his notes on the Itinerary of Giraldus, remarks

⁵ Gir. Cambr., Itin. Cambr., lib. ii. c. vii. ; Camden, Anglica, &c., p. 867. Transl. by Sir R. C. Hoare, vol. ii. p. 103.

⁶ Rowlands' Antiqu. Paroch., Arch. Cambr. vol. iii. p. 296. This valuable Supplement to the "Mona," is, as has been already stated, in possession of the Rev. John Jones, of Llanillyfni, Caernarvonshire. Ibid. vol. i. p. 126. The Thigh stone is noticed also by the Rev.

H. Longueville Jones, in his account of Llanidan, *ibid.* p. 429. One of the marvels of the Isle of Man was a stone that, when removed or cast into the sea, returned at night to a certain valley. Irish version of Nennius, cited Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. xii. p. 141. See a like tradition, Bosquet, Normandie Romanesque, p. 173.

that William Salisbury, who was well acquainted with Welsh antiquities, states that the stone to which the foregoing passage relates, was to be seen in his time, namely in 1554, in the wall of the churchyard "*ecclesiæ D. Ædani in Mona insula.*" That learned writer and linguist was a native of Llanrwst, and, as Camden truly observes, "*Cambriæ antiquitatibus egregie versatus et de patria sua optime meritus.*" He translated the New Testament into Welsh in 1563.

In the report of the visit of the Cambrian archæologists on occasion of their visit to Anglesey during the meeting held at Bangor in 1860, it is asserted that the "*Maen Morddwyd*" is said to be at present fixed in a wall at Porthamel, on the shore of the Menai Straits, the supposed scene of the landing of the Romans under Suetonius, A.D. 61.⁷ Angharad Llwyd likewise assures us that it "is now well secured in the wall of the church" at that place.⁸ I regret to state that, according to recent information from the Rev. W. Wynn Williams, it is no longer to be found.

It may here deserve mention that in certain instances cists or small depositories have been found in the walls of churches of Wales, without any external indications, as customary, of a tomb. Mr. Wakeman relates that in 1847 the old church of Trevethin, Monmouthshire, was demolished in course of "restorations." In the centre of the south wall a coffer or chest was found about 8 ft. above the floor, divided horizontally into two parts, each enclosing bones. In the western gable also of Risca church, in the same county, similar deposits occurred built into the wall, without any indication outside. On either side of the tower there were cists, containing bones, in one instance with 20 or 30 beads of jet or cannel coal. These receptacles measured about 4 ft. by 2 ft., and were about 4 ft. above the floor.⁹

In concluding these notices of certain remarkable objects connected with the Principality, and especially of the reliquaries of unusual description brought to light in Caldey and in Anglesey, it may be observed that several other mediæval relics might be enumerated which have been brought to light from time to time in the Principality, having doubtless been displaced or hastily concealed during the iconoclastic fervor of the sixteenth century. At the annual meeting of the

⁷ Arch. Cambr., third ser., vol. vi. p. 367.

⁸ Hist. of Anglesey, p. 290. This is

an error; there is no church there.

⁹ Ibid. p. 311.

Cambrian archæologists at Llandeilo Fawr, in 1855, the late Mr. Walter Philipps, of Aberglasney, contributed to the local museum a "carved fragment of alabaster representing an angel kneeling and offering up a small box, apparently a *pix*."¹ It had been found in Llanllwny church, Carmarthenshire. Another remarkable object brought to light under similar circumstances is a *plaque* of enameled metal, of thirteenth century *champlevé* work, found in the conventual church of Penmon Priory, Anglesey. The subject is a demi-figure of our Lord, having a red cruciform *nimbus*, the right hand upraised in benediction, a book in the left. This production of the artists of Limoges possibly had doubtless been attached to a shrine, a processional cross, to the binding of a *Textus*, or the like. Enamels of this kind have been brought to this country in abundance of late years; few specimens, however, have occurred in England or Wales that had probably been in use before the Reformation.²

Whilst the foregoing notices of certain Christian relics in the Principality were in the press, my attention was called to a remarkable inscription found some years since in the ruins of the Priory at Caldey, and of which Mr. Westwood has published an excellent facsimile in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*.³ It had been briefly mentioned by Mr. Fenton, who states that in 1810 it was lying in Mr. Kynaston's garden; the inscription in rude characters and much effaced; he could read the name plainly, and concluded that it had been the memorial of one of the early priors named Cadwgan; the stone, he adds, after its removal from its first position, had served the purpose of the lintel of a window; in such a position it had been last found.⁴ It will be seen that from palæographical evidence, although it has not been practicable to ascertain who was the person commemorated, the inscription must be assigned to a date much anterior to the foundation of the Priory in the twelfth century; it is of special value as evidence of Christian occupation of the Isle of Caldey at an earlier period. The memorial must, moreover, be regarded with interest in connection

¹ Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. i. p. 311.

² Ibid. p. 42, where this enamel is figured. It was also exhibited at one of the meetings of the Institute in 1855, and was described in this Journal, vol. xii. p. 97.

³ Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. i. p. 258. The "rubbing" from which the slab is figured by Mr. Westwood had been supplied by Mr. Mason, of Tenby. No allusion is made to the notice of the relic by the Historian of Pembrokeshire.

⁴ Fenton's Tour, p. 458.



ET IN HOC
USI GIVILLAM
FINA PILOBO
OMNIBUS
MILANCIUS
IDIGORRENT
PRO ANIMA
SATIUS ONI

with the foregoing notices of the *Insula Pirrhi*. Through the friendly courtesy of the Cambrian Archæological Association I am permitted to submit to our readers the accurate reproduction of this slab, that has been decyphered and drawn by Mr. Westwood. It is a valuable addition to his series of "Early Inscribed Stones in Wales," given in the above-mentioned Journal. He is of opinion that it may be ascribed to the ninth, or even possibly to the seventh, century.

Mr. Westwood points out the prevalent custom among the early Christians, to which I have already adverted, to establish their communities upon small islands adjoining the coast; free from sudden attack they could there pursue the objects of their existence unmolested. The great establishment of Lindisfarne on the Northumbrian coast,—the religious institutions on the Great Isle of Aran,—on Ireland's Eye, the Skelleg, and other islands on the Irish shores, may be cited as instances of this practice; Bardsey also,—the "Isle of Saints,"—the Chapel Island of St. Tecla at the mouth of the Wye, Barry Island, with many others have been celebrated in Wales for the religious establishments that existed upon them. In the inscribed memorial here figured with Mr. Westwood's skilful care, we have proof of Christian occupation of Caldey long before the period indicated by the architectural features of the existing ruins. The slab measures 5 ft. 9 in. by 16 in.; it is of red sandstone; of the upper portion three feet are occupied by the incised cross and inscription, leaving the remainder of the stone plain, apparently for the purpose of being fixed in the earth. The inscription is thus read by Mr. Westwood,—*Et singno [signo] crucis in illam fingsi [finxi] rogo omnibus ammulantibus ibi exorent pro anima Catuoconi*. The request to passers-by (*ambulantibus*) for prayers for the soul of the deceased is an early instance of such a formula. It is constantly found on early memorials in Ireland; on the crosses with Runes in the Isle of Man it never occurs, as stated by the late Rev. J. G. Cumming.⁵ Catuoconus has not been identified; the name may be a Latinised form of Cathan; a Cambrian saint of that name was known in Caermarthen-shire.

I must refer to Mr. Westwood's memoir for full particulars

⁵ Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. xii. p. 253.

in regard to the palæographical and other peculiarities of this remarkable monument in the Isle of Caldey. He describes the inscription as "in that curious mixture of minuscule and uncial letters transformed into capitals, that became general soon after the departure of the Romans, and which is found in all the oldest native inscriptions and manuscripts both in Great Britain and Ireland."⁶ There may be noticed, near the upper left-hand corner, certain marginal incisions that bear resemblance to Oghams; several examples of that cryptic writing have now occurred in Wales. The slab has been removed and fixed in the wall of the chapel, on the suggestion of an archæologist by whom its value would be truly appreciated, the Rev. James Graves; the letters are, however, it is said, becoming gradually impaired through exposure to weather.

The scorings to which I have alluded are recognised as Oghams by the Rev. H. Longueville Jones, who has devoted special attention to early inscriptions in Wales; he has not, however, in this instance suggested any interpretation.⁷ Two other examples only of the palæographic enigmas, of such frequent occurrence in Ireland, are known to exist in South Wales. In North Wales they have been found more frequently. We owe to the researches and sagacity of Mr. Westwood and Mr. Longueville Jones many valuable notices of these curious relics, of which a single specimen has been recorded in England, namely, at Fardel, Devon, to which our attention was called, in 1861, by Mr. Smirke, and now preserved in the British Museum.⁸ Mr. Richard R. Brash has recently given us a full account of all the Ogham inscriptions that exist in the Principality.⁹

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⁶ Arch. Camb., *ut supra*, p. 261. At the meeting of the Cambrian Archæologists, at Truro, in 1862, fifty-five facsimiles of inscriptions, crosses, &c., were exhibited by Mr. Westwood, showing the gradual change from pure Roman capitals to Hiberno-Saxon, or Hiberno-British minuscules. A list is given, Arch. Camb., third series, vol. viii. p. 362.

⁷ See his notice of a Roman altar bear-

ing Oghams, at Loughor, Glamorganshire. Arch. Camb., third series, vol. xv. p. 262. Of the other Ogham inscriptions, cited as existing in South Wales, one is near Kenfig, in the same county; the other, in Caldey Island, given above.

⁸ Arch. Jour., vol. xviii. p. 175.

⁹ Arch. Camb., third ser., vol. xv. p. 148.