

ART. XVII.—*Notes on Discoveries at Crosscanonby Church, near Maryport. By the REV. R. BOWER, M.A., the Vicar. Read at that place June 17th, 1880.*

THE discoveries at Crosscanonby Church during the restoration have been not numerous, but interesting. I will first speak of those within the Church. These were found after the removal of the plaster, which was carefully taken off, layer by layer, with an old table knife. On the under coat letters soon became visible—sufficient to show that the whole interior walls were covered at one time with texts, &c. Some of these were unintelligible, others were in a fair state of preservation, but soon crumbled away, and could not be retained. The most complete and elaborate painting was that of the Apostle's Creed on the south side, over the entrance door. It was eight feet six inches long by three feet high, surrounded by a kind of zig-zag and riband border painted in red, chocolate, brown, and black. Some of the letters were evidently the work of a more accomplished artist than the rest. Probably the inferior portion was executed by a local painter, who, to the best of his ability, repaired and copied the earlier man's work. This person was also the painter of the other texts. The only legible ones were on the east wall of the Nave. On the south side of the Chancel Arch was the Lord's Prayer; and on the north side Isaiah c. 58, v. 1, as follows:—

ALOUD SPARE not . . .
like a trumpet & sh . .
transgression & the . . .
their sins I say . . .
yers . . . ANNO DOM 1713.

From this I conclude that the earlier part of the Creed was one of the rural paintings alluded to by Bishop Nicolson
in

in 1703, and that after his visit, the texts which had perished were repainted in 1713.

In the chancel great pains were taken to find a piscina, without any result, but two lockers or aumbries were found on the south wall, about two feet from the floor. Bishop Nicolson states that in his time the sanctuary was lower than the rest of the chancel. In that case these lockers would be at a suitable height from the ground, and it is only since the building, here, of the Senhouse vault that the sanctuary has been raised three steps, or about two feet above the rest of the floor.

Another interesting find was made in the nave. It seems the church originally consisted of a Norman nave and chancel. In the thirteenth century an aisle was added; in the construction of this the builders left the roof intact, and inserted a large elliptical arch in the south wall. An original Norman window interfered with this arrangement, but instead of removing the whole of it, they left the upper portion, and ran the new arch through it. The stone work of these (together with all other dressed work), has been carefully cleaned and preserved.

The aisle is also connected with the chancel by a small arch, and on the west side of the pillar, a considerable portion has been sliced off diagonally, after the manner of a squint, to allow the worshippers in the aisle to see the altar.

Under a pew in the chancel were two slabs, one six feet long by two feet nine inches broad, with this inscribed upon it:—

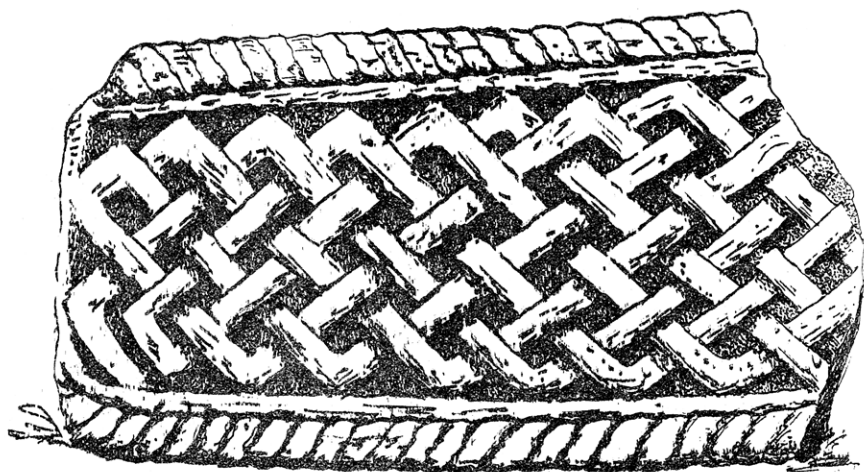
Esposued Elizabeth Daughter of Gawn & Her sister to
Richard Eaglesfield, Esq., their Brother, by whom came Netherhall
the Demeisn & Mannor of Elenburrow to the Senhouses.

The same John Departed this life and was here interred y^e year
1568, and was succeeded by John his son.*

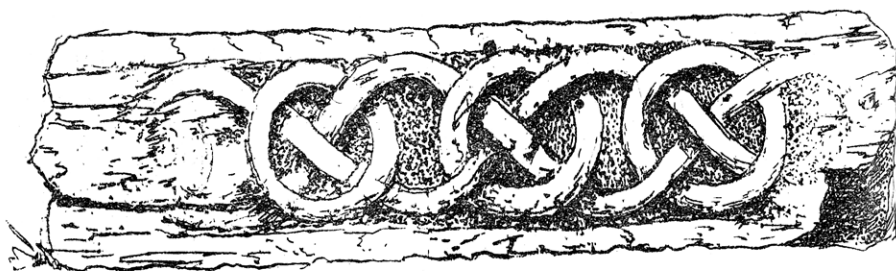
* Elizabeth, elder sister and co-heir of Richard Eaglesfield, son of Gawen Eaglesfield, of Alneburgh Hall (Netherhall), High Sheriff of Cumberland in 9th H. 8, married in 1528 John Senhouse, who died in 1568, and was succeeded by John Senhouse, his third son.

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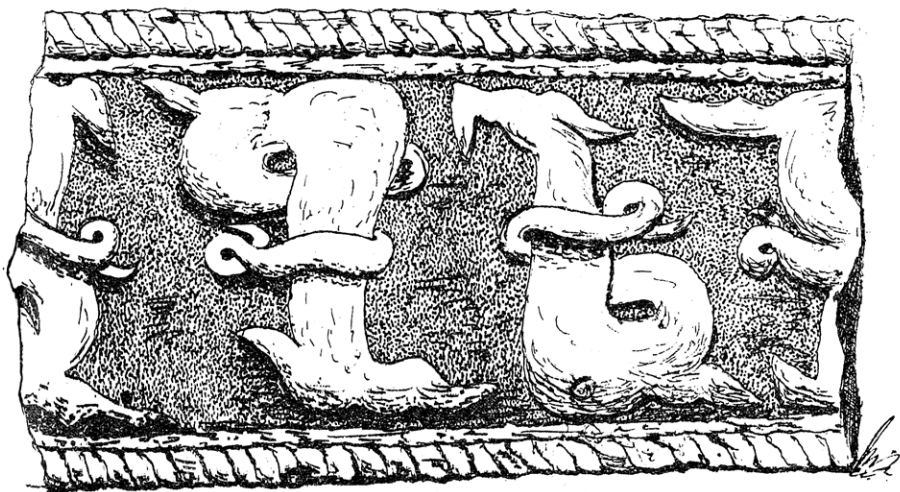
II



INCHES

FROM CROSS CANONBY CHURCH.

III



IV



INCHES.

FROM CROSS CANONBY CHURCH.

The other is six feet six inches long, and three feet three inches wide, and is the cover of the steps to the Senhouse vault. It has this inscription:—

Here lies the Body of
John Senhouse of Nether
Hall Esq.
Was buried May the 20th
Anno 1694.

The north door had been half walled up and the rest glazed. In opening it out a fragment of the shaft of a red sandstone cross was found. It was built into the exterior wall, and was carved on all four sides. See figures I. II. III. IV. No. II. was on the outside, and the pattern was overgrown with moss. Canon Knowles says of it that "it is a very curious stone, so far as I know, unique, perhaps twelfth century?" If I may be allowed to have an opinion, I should think it is earlier than that, seeing it was in existence before the building of the Church itself.

The Canon adds "Crosscanonby, like Dearham, St. Bees, Beckermest, &c., must have been in very early days a missionary centre, devastated by Norsemen, then resuscitated by men trained in the traditions of Lindisfarne, ascetic as I think. But I see nothing at all of Irish influence here at Crosscanonby. This stone is a puzzle to me."

Figure V. is a drawing of a monumental stone found in digging a drain about two feet from the north wall of the chancel, and one and a half feet from the surface. The Rev. T. Lees says, "The square on the dexter side is the textus or book of the Gospels, and if the device above the man is a gridiron, the human figure may represent St. Lawrence, who was in deacon's orders." Canon Knowles states that "it is very early, with an almost Roman broaching. I see nothing in it that may not be of the sixth century. I do not think it is of the Anglian or Lindisfarne school."

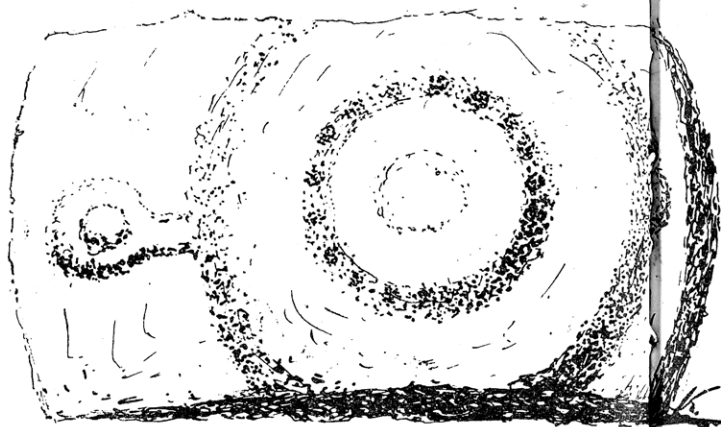
VI.

VI. fell out of the interior of a wall in repairing a window, and had been used as rubble in the construction of the Church. It is a millstone head of a white stone cross. A similar fragment is at Dearham. All such are prior, says the learned Canon, to the Norse invasion.

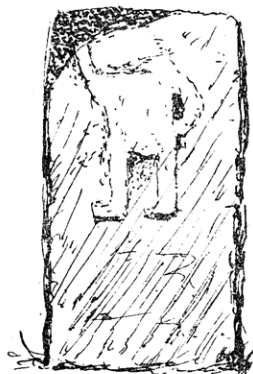
VII., VIII., IX. are the three sides of a stone found close to V., and is clearly of early but uncertain date.

Besides these were found a quern, a half quern, another portion of a cross, and an old corbel. All these stones referred to in this paper were discovered during the restoration, but fragments of others found earlier are to be seen here and there in the churchyard.

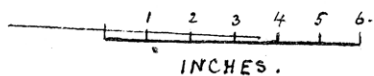
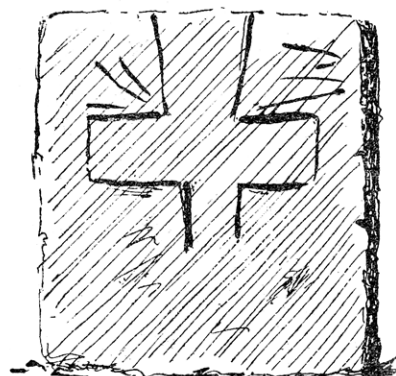
VI



VII

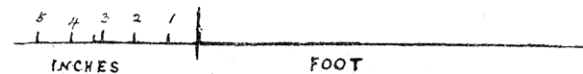
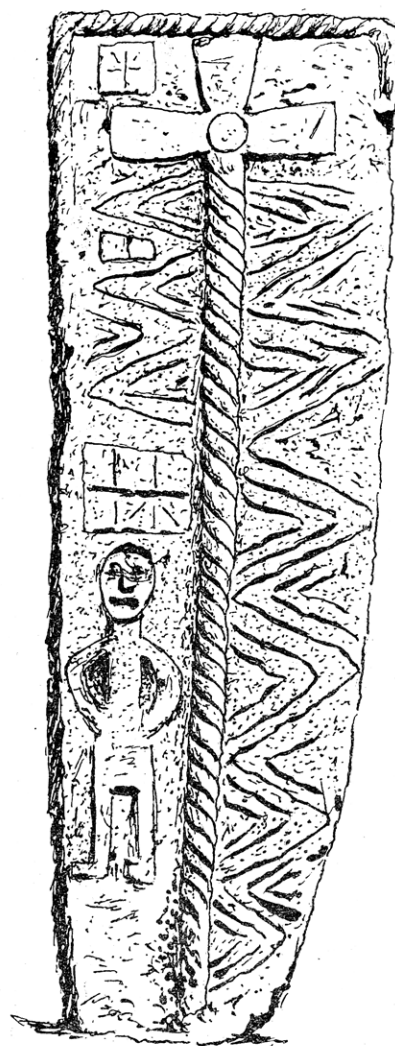


VIII



FROM CROSS CANONBY CHURCH.

V



FROM CROSS CANONBY CHURCH.