

SEPULCHRAL SLAB FOUND DURING THE DEMOLITION OF THE
CHANCEL OF HORE CHURCH, DERBYSHIRE.

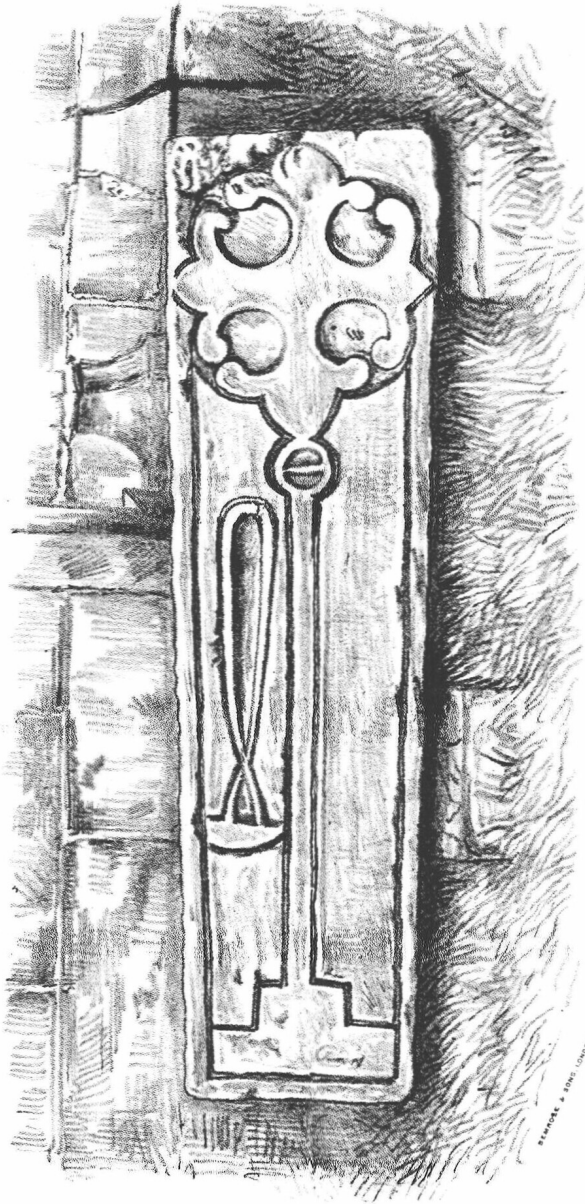
On two Sepulchral Slabs at Hope Church.

BY REV. J. CHARLES COX.



WHEN the sad and absolutely unnecessary work of the demolition of Hope Chancel was in progress during July, 1881, two fairly perfect incised slabs of a sepulchral character were uncovered in the foundations. They were found in the north and south walls respectively, close to the junction of the chancel with the nave, and are good specimens of their class. The stones were promptly photographed by Mr. J. D. Leader, F.S.A., through whose kindness we are able to give the accompanying drawings. Hitherto there has not been a single ancient church or chapel of the Peak district in any way overhauled, which has not yielded more or less abundant specimens of incised gravestones. Our church-building ancestors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries seem to have had no scruples in appropriating these unlettered memorials of the departed, whenever they were in want of a fair-sized slab for a jamb, a lintel, or especially a foundation stone; but they are more frequently found in a mutilated condition. Both examples are of that later kind of incised stones, in which the head of the cross is of a floriated device within a circle, the cross being thrown into relief by cutting away the remaining part of the stone to the depth of about a quarter of an inch; the stem of the cross and the other details being simply produced by ordinary incised lines. The smaller slab of the two has a bugle horn and belt on the right side of the stem of the cross, with

a circular buckle between the stem and cross head. The larger one has a similar horn and belt, with a broad-headed arrow below it, on the same side, and a cross-hilted sword on the left. Their date is probably of the reign of Richard I. or John; and they would be used up in the foundations about a century later. Owing to the extreme paucity of documents of that early period, it would be idle to conjecture to whom these memorials pertained; but the nature of the symbols seems to show that they originally marked the interment of those who had held office as Foresters in the Royal Forest of the Peak.



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