

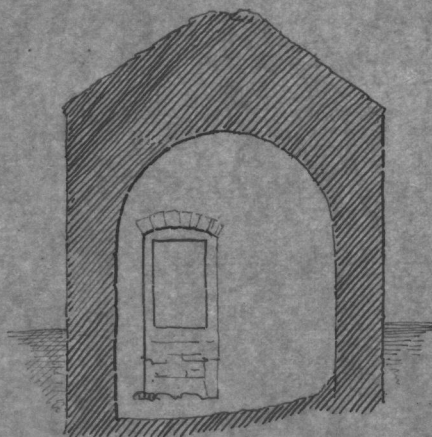
Journal of Method of Assignment

Mr. Fowler

Tomb of M Lead of Assynt



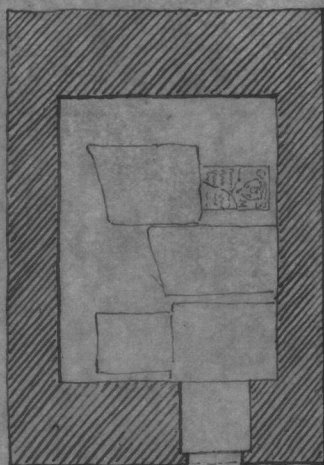
Elevation.



Section.



Slab.



Plan.



Moulding on
Door Rybate.

A few Notes on the Tomb of McLeod of Assynt
in the Churchyard of Inchnadamph.

On a recent visit to Assynt I had an opportunity of examining the Tomb of the McLeods, Lairds of Assynt. My time was limited and my examination was therefore hurried, and I have no doubt some things have been overlooked, but even with these defects I have thought a few notes on this ancient structure, in some respects unique in this county, might not be without interest to the members of this Club.

The Tomb stands in the churchyard of Inchnadamph, and, as will be seen from the rough pen and ink sketch attached to these notes, is a plain massive structure measuring $19\cdot0 \times 13\cdot0$ over the walls, and from the character of the building it may have been built about the same time as Ardrack Castle, the seat of the McLeods, in the immediate vicinity.

In the Statistical account of Assynt written by the Rev^d William Mackenzie in 1793. there is reference made to what seems to be the same structure he writes: "Adjacent to the present parochial Kirk is to be seen the only remaining part of the first of that kind that was built here. The case was, one Eneas or Angus McLeod, Laird of Assynt, having gone to Rome to visit the Pope; and the Pontiff conferring favours, the laird in return vowed, that when he returned to Assynt, he would build and endow a kirk, which the laird performed, to the amount of the fifth part of his

then yearly rent. The only vestige of this ancient building is a vault, a burial place; it is high arched.

"The present Mr McLeod of Geanies, Sheriff Depute of the County of Ross, as immediate descendant of these lairds, gave it a repair a few years ago, but not to the better, as one William Cowie, from Lain, employed, pulled down an upper apartment which was over the arch which the natives reported to be a place for private devotion - Heath now grows on the top of the arch."

It is not quite clear whether the writer of the passage above quoted, had seen the upper apartment said to have been pulled down by William Cowie or whether he got the report from the "natives" from whom he seems to have learned the use to which the chamber was devoted, one is almost inclined to adopt the latter conclusion. At the same time if, as stated above, this is only a vestige of an ancient church there is nothing unreasonable in the idea of an "upper apartment", such chambers are not uncommon over church Porches.

So far as can be seen however, the building as it at present stands seems much better adapted for the purpose for which it has evidently been used than for a church.

The floor of the Tomb is several feet below the surface of the churchyard, and is covered to a considerable extent with flat slabs.

The walls are roughly built and arched over; the

upper part of the arch being covered with grey slates. The door is small, is placed at one end and nearly in a line with the side wall. The lintel of the door is square on the edge but the jambs are moulded, this moulding is a good and characteristic specimen and is frequently met ^{with} in ancient Scottish buildings.

I was unable to discover any inscription except on one of the slabs; this slab differs from all the others in another respect being of sandstone. Unfortunately it has been very much damaged, for not only has it been broken into four pieces but the surface has in some places peeled off and thus the inscription has in part been destroyed.

From the pen-and-ink tracing it will be seen that on the upper part there is a shield of a type not uncommon on such slabs during last century, on which is carved a representation of a burning mountain - the arms of McLeod, over this on a ribbon is their motto. These with the initials (one of which is entire) cover about one half of the stone. On the remaining part there have been three lines in Roman letters, in the first line there are left only two entire words the first and last and part of the second "Here Ly:" - "of". In the second line "Alex" then part of an upright letter and at the end "CHI" a portion of what seems to have been "L" or "E". "CH" and what seems to be "l" following and over the latter a small capital "E". The third line

is more distinct, it begins, "who died" and ends with three figures "718" evidently one figure, the first, is here wanting which, if supplied, would make it read "1718".

The remainder of the inscription is in a different character, half printed, three lines seem to be intended to rhyme. The first line begins with "Religious" then "m" and part of what seems to have been "a" after that a blank and at the end the upper part of what seems to have been the letter "s". The second line is almost complete, it begins, "O rise", this seems to be the proper ending of the first ~~line~~ the next word having a double "ff" indicating apparently the beginning of another line it reads "ffrom grave to glory strive: ing to arise 1725". The lines may have perhaps read somewhat like the following.

Religious man he was, and wise
ffrom grave to glory striving to arise 1725.

The latter date is probably that in which the slab was placed in the vault.

There are two more lines which seem to state that this stone was placed in the vault by Roderick McLeod, in memory of his "Faither".

I have not been able so far to procure any particulars connected with either Alex^r or Roderick McLeod. The writer of the statistical account formerly referred to, under the head of "Eminent

Men", writes: "There are none such in point of grandeur and wealth except the proprietors. There were indeed men of considerable and acknowledged education, literature, polished manners and hospitality viz: Mr Mackenzie late of Ardoch and Mr Rodrick McLeod of Ledmore".

Ledmore is only a few miles distant, but whether the Rodrick McLeod referred to above is the same Rodrick whose name appears on the slab I am unable at present to say. One thing however seems to be certain that long before the remains of Alex^r McLeod were laid in the family burying place the McLeods had ceased to be lairds of Assynt.

There are some curious traditions regarding Assynt, but it first appears in authentic records ^{the lands of Assynt} about 1343. when King David II granted a heritage to Yorkyle McCloyd (of Lewis) It appears to have been held by the McLeods till about 1666. and in 1757. it passed into the hands of the family of Sutherland.

Minster
Jan^y 1851