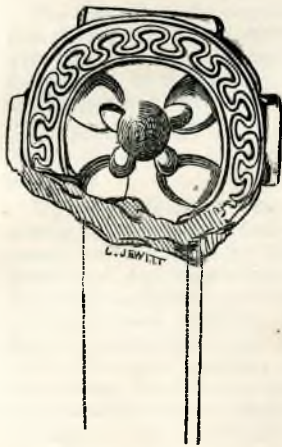


## THE HILBRE CROSS.

*By the Rev. A. Hume, D.C.L., Hon. Secretary.*

THAT there was a cell of Monks at the little islet known as Hilbre, (or St. Hildeburgh's isle,) for several centuries, is well known, but the period of its origin is not stated. In all probability, however, it existed during the reigns of our Saxon monarchs, when Deva or Westchester was a place relatively much greater than it is at present. In 1120, a monk of this cell is said to have advised the adoption of the course by which the constable of Chester was enabled to pass the mouth of the Dee without ships; and when the pathway was round the coast, Hilbre was a place of some note. On Camden's map, a cross is represented as erected on the island; and, considering the veneration attached to this emblem from the earliest times, it is not unlikely that it had existed for several centuries. When the religious associations of the place were rudely dispersed, the cross no doubt disap-



The Hilbre Cross.

peared. It could not easily have been removed, and no one would care to carry it away. About ten years ago the head of a cross, nearly perfect, was dug up in the island. Its type is Saxon; it is of the red sandstone of the district; and it measures 23 inches across. After lying for several years at the Dock office in the Custom House, it came into my possession, and has been engraved. It is morally certain that it is the identical cross which was hallowed by the

associations of centuries, which was visited by pilgrims, and which exhibited to landsmen and mariners the symbol of Christianity during the most barbarous and troubled periods. It has been thought that a local relic of so much interest should be figured and briefly described in one of the volumes of this society. It has been given in the volume entitled "Ancient Meols," which describes the extinct settlement in the immediate neighbourhood of Hilbre, on the sea coast of Cheshire.

