

V.

NOTICE OF A SEPULCHRAL CHALICE AND PATEN OF PEWTER, FOUND  
IN BERVIE CHURCHYARD. BY REV. J. GAMMACK, M.A., DRUMLITHIE,  
CORR. MEM. S. A. SCOT.

In the middle of December 1882, the grave-digger in the churchyard of Bervie found, at the depth of about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  or 5 feet from the surface, the accompanying chalice and paten. The site in the churchyard was about 5 yards southward from the south-east corner of the ruined old church, and the turf or soil did not appear to have been disturbed for many years. The objects were found together among the mould, with the appearance of bones near them. The chalice had been standing upon the paten, and apparently with the bowl downwards. If, as is probable, they had been

buried in the coffin of some ecclesiastic, the weight of the mould, as the coffin decayed, had squeezed the chalice into a depressed condition, and there is no appearance of distortion beyond what would result from direct vertical pressure. The metal, as is usual in such sepulchral deposits, appears to be lead or a heavy pewter. We owe this valuable relic of antiquity to the care and kindness of the Rev. John Brown, M.A., parish minister of Bervie.

But this peculiar *find* at Bervie suggests two questions of great interest as to (1) the prevalence of such deposits, and (2) the position of Bervie as an example of them in Scotland.

(1) The fact is unquestioned that the presence of *insignia* of honour and office, belonging to the deceased, has been common at burial in all ages. It seems to appeal to some natural instinct, and from this consideration we are prepared to receive the evidence that episcopal and sacerdotal interments were often graced with such observances. It was an appeal to the sympathetic attachment of the living, and an unmistakable honour to the dead, that the bishop should be consigned to his last resting-place in the vestments and with the *insignia* of his office, and the priest as still in the discharge of his sacerdotal functions. We have little, if any, record of the actual placing of chalice or paten in the coffin with bishop or priest, but we have abundant *ex post facto* proof on the opening of the tombs, that such had been done. Without going to the Continent, where the same custom was followed, we find a chalice and paten with Bishop Grosseteste (thirteenth century) at Lincoln, with Archbishop William de Melton (fourteenth century) at York, and with Bishop Swinfield (fourteenth century) at Hereford, but they are singularly seldom met with in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that the custom of placing

<sup>1</sup> On inquiry at some of the English cathedrals, we learn that there is no record of any having been found at Canterbury, Ripon, or Carlisle; at Durham none has been found since Henry's Commissioners rifled the tombs in 1541; at Wells there is a pewter chalice; at Lincoln, some half-dozen found in the graves of Bishops Grosseteste, Gravesend, and others; at Hereford, two chalices and patens, the one set (of silver) being from Bishop Swinfield's tomb (1282-1315), and the other (of pewter) from the tomb of his contemporary, and probably his relative, Gilbert de Swinfield,

a chalice and paten in the grave is not of early date, but belongs to the later Middle Age, when the spirit of religion was becoming more and more materialised and hid in formal observances. Though we read that at the Reformation the grave of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne was opened by King Henry's commissioners, and found to contain "a ring of gold, a chalice of gold and onyx, and a paten," yet there is no reason whatever to believe them older than the enshrinement in 1104, when the new cathedral at Durham was made a fitting and final resting-place for the often-shifted relics of the saint; we know that the relics were enshrined with the utmost reverence and honour. But when the remains of St Swithin were raised from their grave, and replaced with honour, in 970; or those of St Edward, king and martyr, in 979; or those of Adulfus, archbishop of York, in 1002; or those of St Oswin, king and martyr, in 1065, at Durham; or those of Wallenus, second abbot of Melrose, in 1171; or those of Ada, bishop of Caithness, in 1239; or the bones generally of the preceding abbots of Melrose, in 1240, we have no mention made of any special *insignia*, unless we are to suppose that the "vestments" were something different from the ordinary trappings of the tomb. This, however, is but negative evidence with regard to the date, *quantum valet*. The shape of these *calices sepulchrales* is always very plain or with the slightest decoration. I send outlines of the chalice and paten found in Bishop Swinfield's grave at Hereford, as represented in Messrs Th. Pratt & Son's *Catalogue of Church Furniture*; the paten shows in the centre a hand raised in benediction, and encircled with the words "Dextera Dei," but the one found at Bervie is plain.

(2) We may assume at once that the grave at Bervie belongs to a date

chancellor of the choir (d. 1297); at York Minster there are three silver chalices, still sometimes used at the altar; at Lichfield, three chalices, two at least being pewter; and at Wells, a pewter chalice. Though found in the churchyard at Kingoldrum with the well-known bell in 1843, the bronze chalice and glass bowl do not appear to have been properly sepulchral, but buried for security. At the Scotch museums we can find no specimens of the sepulchral chalice or paten, except, perhaps, two patens at the manse of Birmie; and the chalice and paten of wax from the tomb of Bishop Tulloch of Orkney in the National Museum.

prior to, or very soon after, the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and unfortunately we know little of the condition of Bervie till some time after the separation of the parish from Kinneff. About the end of the thirteenth century Bervie is ranked with Dundee, when, as related by John of Fordun (*Ann.* i. c. 30), King William conferred on his brother David, Earl of Huntingdon, "the earldom of the Garioch, the town of Dundee, the town of Inverbervie, and the lordship of Longforgan, with many other lands." In 1483, when the Parliament, held in Edinburgh on the 21st day of March and continuation of days, imposed taxes upon the burghs beyond the Forth, Bervie is rated at 10s., which may be compared with Forfar's £1, 6s. 8d., Arbroath's £2, Brechin's £4, Montrose's £5, 6s. 8d., and Dundee and Aberdeen's £26, 13s. 4d. (*Spald. Club, Misc.*, v. p. 27). In the temporal lordship of Lindores, the Commendator and first Lord Lindores in 1600 had conferred upon him by royal charter, for his "good and faithful services," *inter alia*, "an annual rent of eight shillings from Bervie, in the county of Kincardine." And as matter of fact, from the time of its receiving the charter of a royal burgh from King David II. in 1342, and again from its renewal by King James VI. in 1595, Bervie, or more properly Inverbervie, must have been a place of some local importance, and up to the beginning of the present century it contained residences of the neighbouring gentry. About the fifteenth or sixteenth century, and probably earlier, there seems to have been a House of the White Friars, whose places of residence and interment were near the "Friars' Dubbs," near the east end of the burgh. The late Precentor Walcott mentions the names of three priors—James Howysone about 1480, John Lyndsay about 1539, and John Anderson (without a date); by the beginning of the seventeenth century the friary was decayed, and the revenues, &c., alienated. But of the details of Bervie's social and ecclesiastical condition we have no evidence. In 1608 it was still a part of the parish of Kinneff, and the parish minister maintained a suffragan at Bervie. In 1618, the Lords for the Plantation of Kirks disjoined Bervie from the parent parish. But before its disjunction, the royal burgh must have been the chief centre of population in the parish of Kinneff, and

had probably a chapel and place of interment within the bounds of the burgh. In the Old Taxatio there is entered "Kinneff cum capella," and this *capella* is more likely to have been at Bervie than at Barras in the same parish. In other words, the cause of the disjunction of Bervie from Kinneff was, in all likelihood, not the mere extent of the parish, but the claims of Bervie as already possessing the population and ecclesiastical appliances without the parochial status. Of the priests, however, who served there in the pre-Reformation period we have no record whatever, and this chalice and paten were placed to honour the tomb of some priest now unknown, who rests from his labours, and to the world is nameless.