

#### IV.

NOTICE OF ANCIENT CELTIC BELLS AT GLENLYON, FORTINGALL,  
AND INCH. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, ASSIST. SEC. AND KEEPER OF  
THE MUSEUM.

*Glenlyon.*—Until recently but one bell of the flat-sided form used in the early Celtic church was known in Glenlyon, viz., the iron bell of Cladh Bhrennu, an ancient burying-ground beside the farm-house of Kerrumore. This bell has stood in the burying-ground unprotected for centuries. It is now, however, enclosed in a niche in the wall of the cemetery, and placed under lock and key. As it has never been noticed in the Proceedings of the Society, I take this opportunity of placing it on record in connection with the recent discovery of two other bells of the same form and character which have been preserved in the same district, though hitherto unknown.

The fact that a group of three of these bells exists in this district, shows that it was in early times an important locality in connection with the history of the early church, and we find accordingly that the great abthane or territory of the Abbacy of Dull extended over both the parishes of Dull and Fortingall, embracing the whole of the valley of Glenlyon. The foundation of the monastery of Dull is attributed to St Adamnan, who died in the beginning of the 8th century. The chapel which stood in the old cemetery of Cladh Bhrennu has long disappeared, and its dedication is unknown. In a charter by Hugh, Bishop of Dunkeld, confirming to the

canons of St Andrews the church of Dull and the chapel at Fossach, he exempts the chapel of Branboth, in Glenlyon. The name appears at a later date in the obits of the "Chronicle of Fortingall" as Branwo. Mr Charles Stewart states that the tradition of the glen ascribes the building of the chapel to the M'Dougals of Lorn, and the dedication to their special saint, Brandan. But there is nothing more authentic than the slender similarity of the name to back this tradition, and I therefore leave the attribution of the bell to St Brandan as an open question.

*Fortingall.*—I am indebted to the Rev. J. B. Mackenzie of Kenmore, a Fellow of the Society, for the photographs of the Bell of Fortingall now exhibited. The existence of this bell was first made known to me by the Rev. Mr M'Lean of Grantully, when on a visit to the museum in the course of last summer; and the Rev. Mr M'Kenzie, to whom I mentioned it, kindly offered at once to send me photographs and measurements of it. This he did in September last, and I quote from his letter the following account of the bell:—He says, "I herewith send you photographs of the Fortingall Bell. It is roughly oval in shape, and measures 6 by 7½ inches across the mouth, and 9 inches high. It seems to me to be of iron dipped in melted bronze, if such a thing be possible. I have secured for you a small piece of the metal of which it is composed. The handle is in two pieces, soldered together. The bell is rivetted up the sides. Its history I have not ascertained yet. I only know that it has for long been in the church, and for the last two generations in the manse, but through time I may be able to learn its traditional history."

A small portion of the metal bronze-like coating of the bell has been analysed by Mr W. Ivison Macadam, F.C.S., Lecturer on Chemistry, with the following results:—

	Average of Two Analyses.
Iron, . . . . .	47·69
Copper, . . . . .	45·98
Tin, . . . . .	3·42
Siliceous Matter, . . . . .	2·89
	99·98

The siliceous matter is probably derived from the soil. Deducting this, the following average results are obtained :—

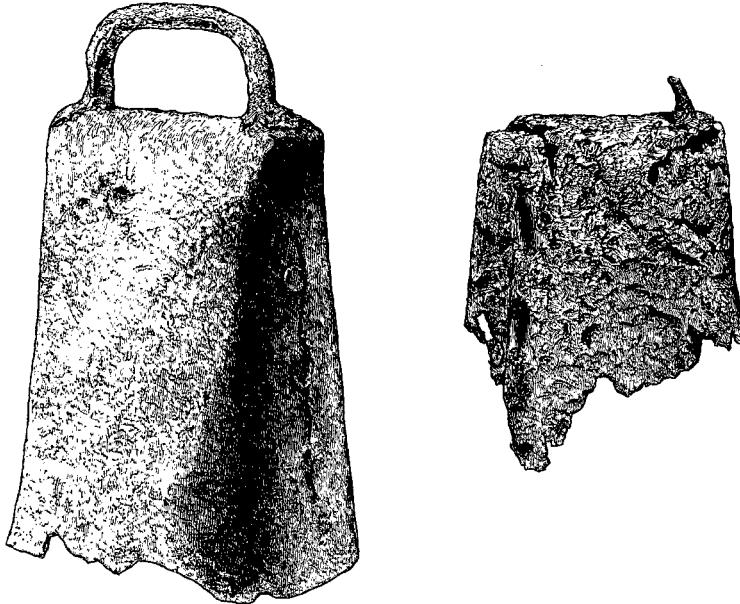
	Average of Two Analyses.
Iron, . . . . .	49·11
Copper, . . . . .	47·35
Tin, . . . . .	3·51
	<hr/> 99·97

The bell appears to be composed of an inner layer of iron, coated on both surfaces with bronze.

W. IVISON MACADAM, F.C.S.,  
*Lecturer on Chemistry.*

Mr Charles Stewart of Tigh'n Duin, Killin, who has given much attention to the ecclesiastical antiquities of his native district, is of opinion that the church of Fortingall was dedicated to St Cedd. He therefore concludes that this may be his bell. Bishop Forbes in his Calendar, under St Machute (who was a disciple of St Brandan), says that "Some think that he is the Saint Mochoat of the 9th August, who is known by the fair of the Feil Macoit at Logierait on 22d August, and also that "Leith's true Almanack" for 1707 gives St Machthead's Day at Kirktown of Fortingall on the 9th of August. The day of St Cedd however was January 7, and that of his brother Chad, March 2. It is difficult to understand why there should be a series of dedications to these Northumbrian saints in this neighbourhood. It has been conjectured that there is a commemoration of St Cuthbert at Weem, and the Irish life of the saint seems so far to countenance the supposition when it says, that—"After St Cuthbert had arrived in Scottish land he began to dwell in different parts of the country, and coming to a town called Dul, forsook the world and became a solitary." "Not more than a mile from Dul" (says the same record) "there is in the woods a high and steep mountain called Doil weme, and on its summit he began to lead a solitary life." Such details as these can scarcely be founded on as fixing the locality of the events narrated, even supposing that it was certain that the events themselves had actually occurred. But there is no such ground for the connection of the brothers Cedd and Chad with

Glenlyon, and the dedication of the church of Fortingall may be a later one to St Catherine. I am informed by Mr W. F. Skene that the old fair at Fortingall, called *Feile Ceitt*, was held on the first Tuesday of December.<sup>1</sup> But while it may be impossible to determine the older



The Bell of Fortingall (9 in. high).

Bell found at Balnahanait (7 in. wide).

dedication, there can be no doubt of the authenticity of the bell, which is one of the most characteristic specimens of these interesting relics of the Celtic church.

<sup>1</sup> Many years ago, when such information was more easily obtained than it is now, Mr Skene was at great pains to ascertain the dates of the several fairs in Athole, and has favoured me with the following note of them, which it may be useful to preserve:—Strowan, *Feile Fhaolan*, 9th January; Blair, *Feil Brid*, 12th February; Kilmaveonag, *Feil Espog Eoin*, 1st Wednesday of September; Lude, *Feil Seumas*; Dull, *Feil Eonine*, 6th October; Foss, *Feil Phadrick*, 17th March; *Feil Maghaugh*, 5th February; Fortingall, *Feile Ceitt*, 1st Tuesday of December; Logierait, *Feil Machoit*, 22d August.

The bell now exhibited is the third bell of the Glenlyon group. A notice of it having appeared in the "Scotsman" in October last, I wrote to the Rev. Mr M'Kenzie, and through his good offices the bell was immediately forwarded by Mr Charles Stewart, the writer of the notice, for exhibition to the Society. At my request he drew up a short statement of the circumstances connected with the discovery of the bell which is as follows:—

"In writing to the 'Scotsman' as to the finding of this bell, I stated that it was found in a field, but in doing so I either misunderstood Mr Stewart of Balnahanait, or he made an oversight. I now give you the circumstances in which it was found. In consequence of a request on my part, and an expectation which I had led them to entertain (founded partly on the meaning of the name Balnahanait) Mr Robert Stewart the farmer, and his nephew Duncan Stewart, who lived with him, were on the outlook for antiquities connected with the ancient faith. In the month of August 1870 the latter found this bell betwixt the wall and the eaves of an old cart shed at Balnahanait. In consequence of what I had told them, it occurred to him that it was a relic of the kind which he had been led to expect, or else he might have paid no attention to it. The bell was handed to me by Mr Robert Stewart, and I now send it for exhibition to the Society."

Mr Stewart inclines to the belief that this bell may be St Eonan's. There was a fair held at Dull on St Eonan's Day, and till a very recent period the mill at Balvoulin Eonan, in Glenlyon, always stopped work on the saint's day. But Mr Stewart states that he has difficulty in accepting the common view that this St Eonan is Adamnan, because the day of the fair (6th October) is not Adamnan's Day, which was September 23, and the tradition of the glen is that St Eonan died at Balvoulin Eonan and was buried at Dull, which we know was not the case with Adamnan. I am not inclined to consider these objections insuperable however. Allowing for the difference of old and new style, and the disturbing influence of modern changes of market days to prevent them from interfering with

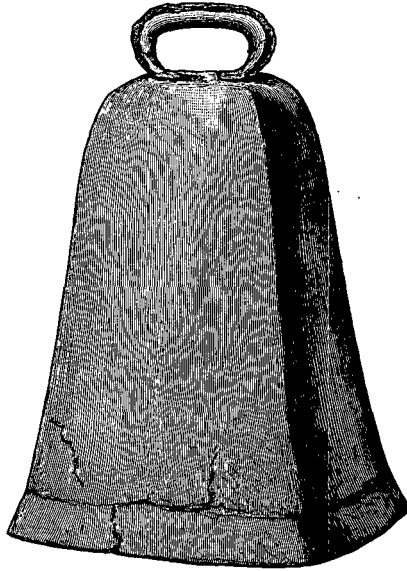
each other, the day is not far off the proper time, and no other Eonan has ever been known to dispute with Adamnan the numerous dedications under that name in Scotland.

*Healing Stones of St Fillan.*—Mr Stewart has also sent me an account of the healing-stones of St Fillan, which are still preserved in a niche of the wall of the mill at Killin. It is stated that such a niche has been always made in the wall of the new mill which succeeded the old, down to the present day; and Mr Stewart states that not very long ago the villagers assembled on the saint's day and put clean straw under the stones. They were considered to be efficacious in cases of insanity and rheumatism. Mr Stewart describes them as common stones taken from the bed of the river. They are hard quartzose boulders, the largest weighing 8 lbs. 10 oz. There are seven or eight of them. What specially interested me in them was the statement of Mr Stewart that some of them had shallow rounded cavities or markings on them, which are wider at the surface of the stone and grow narrower to the bottom. I exhibit a rough sketch of two of them which Mr Stewart has sent me, and from all that I can make out, without seeing the stones themselves, believe that those that are so marked are merely the socket stones in which the spindle of the upper millstone used to work before the introduction of the improved machinery. We have a number of these in the museum, and I exhibit two of them, to show how closely they agree in character with the description given of the healing-stones of St Fillan.

*Inch.*—The bell, which is preserved at the old Church of Inch, near Kingussie, is of cast bronze, closely resembling in form and appearance the bell of St Fillan of Glendochart. It was seen some years ago by Captain Thomas, and it was from his notes of its size and appearance that I first became aware of its existence. Through the kindness of the Rev. S. R. Macphail I have been favoured with a drawing of the bell (by Mr Galloway Macdonald) from which the accompanying woodcut has been engraved.

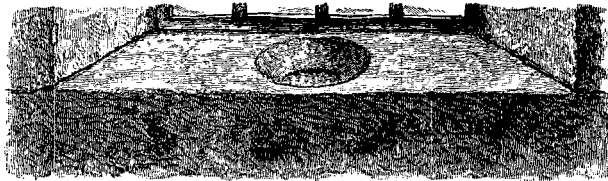
The bell is 10 inches high, exclusive of the handle, and 8 inches by 5 inches along the edges of the rim at the bottom. The handle

is  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. The second drawing shows the sole of the window on which the bell stands, in which there is a



Bronze Bell at Inch, near Kingussie ( $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches high).

curious basin-shaped hollow which may have been the font of the early church. The slab which now forms the window-sole is of granite, and



Slab with basin-shaped hollow, in window-sill of Church at Inch.

the basin-shaped hollow is 17 inches wide at the mouth, narrowing somewhat to the bottom, and 4 inches deep.