

NOTICE OF A CELTIC BELL OF BRONZE, FROM LITTLE DUNKELD.

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The bell now exhibited by the Rev. James Mackenzie, minister of Little Dunkeld, was brought under my notice by the Rev. Mr Maclean of Grandtully, to whose good offices the Society is indebted for this opportunity of comparing it with the Celtic Bells in the National Collection.

The bell (as will be seen from the annexed engraving, fig. 1) is of cast bronze, is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, inclusive of the handle, which rises $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the top of the bell. The body of the bell is thus 7 inches in height and $7\frac{1}{4}$ by $6\frac{1}{8}$ inches across the mouth, tapering to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches across the top, the thickness of the metal varying from $\frac{5}{16}$ in the middle to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch at the mouth, when there is a thickening in the form of a slight bevel of the outer edge. The handle, which rises almost straight up from the two narrow sides of the bell, exhibits a flaw in the casting, which has been repaired by a subsequent pouring of the metal.

This bell is the fourth of these Celtic bells of bronze now known in Scotland. The others are—(1) The Bell of St Fillan, from Strathfillan, now in the National Museum; (2) The Bell of St Eonan (Adannan), at Insh on the Spey, near Kingussie, which stands in a window of the church of Insh; (3) The Bell of St Finan, of Eilean

Finan in Loch Shiel, Ardnamurchan, which lies on a flat tombstone in the churchyard of Eilean Finan, where it has been exposed to the elements and to the risk of abstraction from time immemorial.

The ecclesiastical foundation of Dunkeld is attributed by the Register of St Andrews to Constantine MacFergus, the last of the Pictish kings, in whose reign the irruptions of the Pagan Northmen on the West Coast had threatened the security of Iona as the resting-place of the relics of



Fig. 1. Bronze Bell, from Little Dunkeld.

St Columba, and scattered its monks. In 849 the church of Dunkeld was re-edified by Kenneth M'Alpin, the first of the Scottish dynasty, who had united the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms. For his new church he collected the relics of St Columba, and enshrined them there. Its possessions were very widely extended, and its first abbot Tuathal, who died in 864, is called also Bishop of Fortrenn, though none of his recorded successors are so styled.¹ But the Celtic Abbacy of Dunkeld in the

¹ In the *Annals of Ulster* we have obits of several of its abbots, as in 864 Tuathal MacArtgus, chief Bishop of Fortrenn and Abbot of Duncaillen; in 872 Flaithbertach, son of Muircertach, princeps of Duncaillden, died; in 964 a battle between the men of Alba at Moneitir, where many were slain, together with Donnchadh, the abbot of Dun-caillen; in 1027 Duncaillen in Alba was entirely burned; and in 1045 there was another battle among the Albanach between themselves, in which was slain Cronan, abbot of Duncaillen.

eleventh century had become an appanage of the Crown, and subsequently descended to the Earls of Fife. In the Reformation of the Celtic Church system under David I. the abbot of the Culdee Monastery was made the first bishop of the remodelled see of Dunkeld, and a chapter of regular canons placed along with him in the cathedral; while the Culdee corporation was constituted a college of secular clergy, and existed side by side with the canons regular of St Augustine for more than two centuries. Early in the thirteenth century the diocese was divided, and the western portion, corresponding with the newly erected sheriffdom of Argyle, was placed under a new prelacy—that of the Bishopric of Argyle, whose cathedral church was to be at Lismore.

The Bishopric of Dunkeld had large possessions in the Lothians. Preston, Bonkill, Aberlady, Abercorn, Cramond, and Inchcolm were dominical lands of Dunkeld. The early bishops lived much at Cramond, and several of them were buried in Inchcolm. Bishop William St Clair, who succeeded to the bishopric in 1312, united to the Archdeaconate of Dunkeld the church of Logynalloquhy, and gave to the church at Little Dunkeld the glebe which the vicar possessed in the time of Alexander Mylne, Canon of Dunkeld, who wrote the Lives of the Bishops of Dunkeld about 1515. From his work it appears that Little Dunkeld, before the year 1500, included what is now the parish of Caputh, and Dowally, now united to Dunkeld, was part of Caputh. There was no parish of Dunkeld, and Little Dunkeld was thus the parish church of the district around the cathedral. If this bell was a relic of the early foundation, as from its analogy with other early Celtic Bells there seems no reason to doubt, it is quite in accordance with the history of other known bells of its kind that it should not have been found associated with the cathedral, but with the parish church, which retained the older associations, when the new cathedral was supplied with Augustinian Canons, to whom the veneration of the Celtic saints was little better than heresy.

There is nothing known of the more recent history of the bell except what has been communicated to me by the Rev. James Mackenzie, the minister of the parish. He says—"I can find no information about the bell beyond the fact that it was in Little Dunkeld church when I came to

the parish in 1866. At that time there were considerable repairs made, and as I found the bell thrown carelessly aside, I took it to the Manse, where it has been ever since. One of my elders told me that it was put up at the roup of my predecessor's effects, and that he prevented it from being sold by claiming it as church property."
