

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF AN INSCRIBED STONE AT WEEM,
NEAR ABERFELDY, PERTHSHIRE, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF
ST CUTHBERT'S CONNECTION WITH WEEM. BY ALEXANDER
HUTCHESON, F.S.A. Scot.

While residing at Aberfeldy, Perthshire, in the autumn of 1893, and visiting the old church of Weem, distant about a mile from the former village, I observed leaning up against the south wall of the church a stone slab bearing an inscription in lettering so unusual and puzzling in form that I procured a photograph of the stone, a copy of which accompanies this notice.

On making inquiry I learned that the stone had shortly before been discovered at a depth of 2 or 3 feet below the surface while a grave was being dug, that it was lifted out and placed where I saw it lying against the wall of the church, which is now only kept in repair as a place for intramural interments. Through the good offices of Rev. John M'Lean, F.S.A. Scot. (since deceased), I got the stone removed to the interior of the church for better preservation, although unfortunately, as I afterwards discovered, the stone in the course of removal had sustained a fracture at the edge next to the main part of the inscription.

The stone is an undressed slab of a hard slaty crystalline rock of irregular form about 5 feet in length, 1 foot 9 inches in breadth at the widest part, whence it tapers rapidly to one end, and from 5 to 6 inches in thickness.

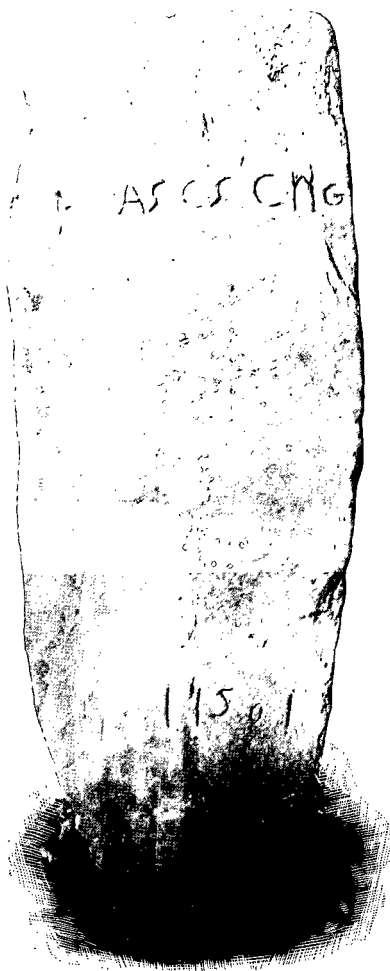
The inscription is in two lines, separated from each other by a wide interval. In both, the letters, which are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, are

incised. In the longer inscription there are seven letters. The first letter is undoubtedly an A, the familiar form of which might have been expected to assist in the identification of the other letters, but has not done so. The second and fourth, shaped like a reaping-hook, are very peculiar, and may be intended for the same letter, but there are points of difference.

They may be intended for S, R, or Q. The third and fifth letters of the inscription look like C, but they also differ slightly in form. It has been suggested that instead of C they may be round-backed E, the central tongue of which has weathered out, although no trace of it now remains. The sixth letter, like the second and fourth, defies transliteration. It may be an H, M, or W, but I can trace no such forms of these letters. The only example I can find is given in Fry's *Pantographia*, p. 88, where it appears as an N, in an old French alphabet of the fifth century. Again, it may represent more than one letter, what is known as a ligatured or compound letter, two or three letters conjoined in one, a practice of great antiquity. The concluding letter seems like a small capital G, or round-backed or Lombardic E, the tongue of which has partly weathered out. On the whole, I think it is G.

The lower line of inscription, at the first glance, looks like the figures 17501. Inverting it and reading from above it may yield IOSLI. Early inscriptions reading in a reverse order are met with, arranged also along the sides, parallel to all the edges of stone slabs, and reading from within. Such inscribed slabs were presumably intended to be recumbent. There is nothing in the Weem slab to indicate how it had been originally placed—upright or recumbent,—although it may well have been set on end with the narrow point in the ground

A very simple explanation occurred to me: it may be mentioned. A



Inscribed Stone in Weem
Churchyard.

somewhat wide acquaintance with Highland graveyards has shown that, doubtless owing to the hardness of many of the native rocks, monumental inscriptions, especially on the older stones, are often confined to a mere record of family initials. This practice, no doubt, finds expression also in Lowland burying-grounds, even where the full Christian and surnames are given, the initials of the parents and children being sometimes arranged in columnar order at the sides below.

What then if this puzzling inscription be only a record of family initials, here in one continuous line, instead of as usual arranged in a column as thus:—

A S
C S
C H G

and the date 1751 expressed as 17501, in like fashion with the man who entered his age in the census paper as 401, that is, 40 and 1, in place of 41?

The difficulty in accepting this as an explanation is that no stone of a date so recent as 1751 has yielded such very archaic-looking letters.

Another difficulty arises when considering the association of three initial letters, C H G, in the last place of which neither the ultimate nor penultimate letter agrees with the surname initial in the preceding pairs of letters. Moreover, the presence of a middle letter in such initial inscriptions is almost if not quite unknown, nor can there be here in this aspect any suggestion of a titular initial. It would therefore seem that such a comparatively recent date as 1751 is untenable. A careful search in the burying-grounds in the neighbourhood failed in tracing any similar lettering. If then the inscription is to be read IOSLI, as above suggested, it may be remarked that this word resembles the concluding word of the ogham on the stone at Newton of Inch, read by Lord Southesk as "IOSII."¹

In dealing with the main line of the inscription it must be apparent that a considerable diversity of spellings results from the various alternatives offered by the unidentified letters, but no feasible association from any one of them. So far, the first letter A, if round-backed E be discarded, would seem to be the only vowel in the word, if indeed it be only one word, and along with the third and fifth letters, regarded as C (or round-backed E), would indicate that the inscription is in capitals throughout. It is, however, proper to remark that we may not possess the whole of the inscription, there being just in front of it a hollow from which evidently a skelb has come off, possibly the result of an accident when the stone

¹ *Proc. S.A. Scot.*, xvii. 39. It has been suggested to bear a likeness to "IOSA," the Gaelic form of the sacred name Jesus.

was lifted out of the ground. In this way one or more letters may have been lost.

Assuming for the nonce that there may have been an M in front of the A, and that the succeeding letter is a Q (an uncommon letter in Roman letter inscriptions but common in oghams), succeeded by a round-backed E, and reading M for the sixth letter, one might try the transliteration (M)AQE QEME. Q is generally reckoned equal to CU, which would give for the last word CUEME, yielding, phonetically rendered, MAC WEME, with possibly a reference to the place-name.

This is, however, not very feasible, seeing there is not here any clan or family name of Weem. A Lowland form of Wemyss is found as early as the twelfth century, doubtless derived from the territory of Wemyss on the Fife coast of the Firth of Forth, where the numerous caves would in Gaelic-speaking times originate that place-name.

The surname of Wemyss, so far as I have been able to trace, has no connection with the Perthshire parish. The family prefix Mac, if accepted, presupposes a family name, and there are others common to the Highland clans not so very different in appearance and sound, such as Mac Cowan, Mac Kean, Mac Ewen, etc. Applying this, and keeping in mind that Q = CU, and in oghams = K, and taking the sixth letter as N, we have the alternatives Mac Cuene and Mac Kean.¹ Whether this is even probable must be left until identity of letters can be determined with greater probability of satisfactory results.

So far no attempt had been made to analyse the minor line of the inscription. At first sight it looked as if it might be of later origin. Only one of the complex letters of the upper line was here repeated, if indeed the central letter be the same as the second and fourth above. I have, however, come to the conclusion that it was cut by the same workman who inscribed the main line, and base that conclusion mainly on this peculiar central letter; but also as bearing on an archaic origin I consider that some at least of the letters in the main inscription are not the rude work of an uninstructed mason or stonecutter, but are characterised by a finish betokening a degree of artistic taste—such workmanship, moreover, as could only have been executed with sharp-edged metal tools, as evinced particularly in the V-cutting of the fourth and fifth letters. Reverting to the minor line, I refer first to the central character, and, taking it in the reverse order, that is, reading it from above, it resembles closely the second and fourth of the main line, especially in the expanded ends. I dismiss the idea that it might be the figure 5. I know of no

¹ This name as well as Mac Cuene is probably a modernised form for which Kean and Cowan would be still more modern, the K and the C being in themselves merely a shortening of the patronymic Mac, the original form of each respectively being Mac Ian and Mac Owan, etc.

ancient example of that figure terminating at the lower point in an expanded end as here.

The supposed figure 7 may also be dismissed on similar grounds of form. The accent-like mark at the top or bottom, according as it is looked at from above or below, may give to the upright character or possess in itself a distinct and separate value, if it cannot, looked at from above, be regarded as here assumed as a capital L. I have read it "Iosli," but cannot suggest a relationship to the main line of inscription.

This line of inquiry was based mainly on the supposed existence of a prefixed letter M which had scaled off. The reason which led to its adoption is stated in the argument.

I had, however, all along felt that until the identity of the two final letters could be established, no progress was possible. The final character had been read as a round-backed or Lombardic E, the central tongue of which existed only at the outer point, the inner part of it having weathered out. Reflection has convinced me that this letter is unmistakably a G. This is a very rare letter as a terminal in Scottish place-names and in personal appellations. It is, however, not so in words having an Irish or Welsh connection. If then this letter is really G, what is the preceding letter? The suggested letters H, M, and N do not fit. But on turning to Welsh forms we find the terminal "WG" occurrent in both place-names and personal names: Morganwg in Llandaff is an instance of the former, and Cattwg, the Welsh form of S. Cadoc, the first abbot of Llancarvan, is an example of the latter (*The Historians of Scotland*, vii. pp. 350-1). It is unnecessary to multiply examples. Applying this, it will at once be recognised that the sixth letter complies more closely with the form of W than any of the other suggested letters—a pointed arch between two upright stems,—although I have not been able to trace any lapidary or textual example of the form. Possibly a search of Welsh records and inscriptions, not available to me, might result in the confirmation of this suggestion.

Taking then the main inscription on the Weem stone as complete in itself, and reading, as I now incline to do, the second and fourth letters as S and third and fifth as C, we get ASCSCWG, the sound of which may be ventured at as nearly ASK SKOOG. Ascough is a personal name, and also a place-name. William Ascough was Bishop of Sarum and Confessor to King Henry VI. in 1450. Asquith and Askew are probably forms of the name. Ascog, as a place-name, given later as Ascough, occurs in the island of Bute. John Stewart of Ascog was M.P. for Bute in 1633. In 1645 a warrant was given to the Marquis of Argyll to bring Captain Stewart of Escoge prisoner from Dumbarton to Edinburgh.¹ These

¹ Acts of Parliament of Scotland.

instances of the existence of a name, both place-name and personal, suggest, if above reading be correct, that a person, either territorially or patronymically so designated, may have been commemorated on the Weem stone.

No attempt had hitherto been made to read into the inscription a Roman origin, for the reasons, first, that some of the characters have not been recognised as Roman letters, especially the second, fourth, and sixth of the main line; and second, because of the absence of dividing points between them.

The entire absence of points would be unusual but not unknown in Roman inscriptions. The difficulty here is that these characters in that case would be all sigla, whereas while these are common on Roman monuments and on coins,¹ there are always present conjunctions, although

¹ The occurrence of isolated initial letters, from the limited space available, is common on coins, and this has prevailed from the earliest to the latest times. What may be regarded as a favourable modern example is found in the legend on the reverse of the crown-piece of George II., and on the early coinage of George III., as follows:—M. B. F. ET H. REX. F. D. B. ET L. D. S. R. I. A. T. ET E., the translation being—*Magnæ Britanniae, Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Rex, Fidei Defensor, Brunsvicensis et Luneburgensis Dux, Sacri Romani Imperii Archi Thesaurarius et Elector*,—King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and Luneburg, Arch-Treasurer and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire.

A remarkable instance of initial-inscription exists in the Houff burying-ground, Dundee, which so far as known to me has never been published, but may be worthy of preservation. It is recorded in Thomson's MS. Book of the Houff, a copy of which is preserved in the Dundee Free Library, but with some slight errors, which are here corrected. Thomson does not tell how he arrived at the expansion, but he lived in the early part of the last century, and it is just possible it was then common knowledge in the town.

The tombstone, which is a plain upright slab lettered on both sides, is No. 321 in the register.

On the east side it bears:—

“Erected by William Clark, Jailer, Dundee, and Isabel McGilveray his spouse in memory of their children, viz. Nicholas died the 15th Feby. 1797, aged 5 months; Isabel died 11th Novr. 1808, aged 5 years & 10 months; Daniel died 17th Novr. 1812, aged 14 years and 8 months; Alexr. died at Jamaica, 27th May, 1817, aged 17 years; John died 13th Novr. 1826, aged 18 years; Sophia died 17th Sept. 1827, aged 22 years; and the mother of 5 sons and 5 daughters died 7th Jany. 1830, aged 53 years.”

On a small brass plate inserted on west side of stone appear the following letters:—

“T. S. & T. W. B. W. T. I. W. T. R. A. C. F. S. D. Y. P.”

Then below in an arched form cut in the face of the stone are the following letters and verse:—

“I. W. C. D. O. T. O. S. C. T. D. I. O. 1793. T. I. H. M.
S. A. N. O. I. A. L. O. A. G. P. A. A. H. O. A. H. B. R.

Cuimhich am Bas.

Now we have reached the heavenly shore
These mortal frames we need no more,
Their work is done, the grave devours,
And now these frames are no more ours.

Reader, this is certain;
Dost thou believe it?”

The explanation is prosaic enough, and seems something like a joke for the benefit of the gravedigger, Thomas Shepherd, and his assistants—“the working band,” who were to explain the

commonly abbreviated, of associated letters to give a lead in determining what the sigla stand for; but even then, in many cases they have had to be guessed at.

Roman sepulchral inscriptions are usually of the briefest, and follow a recognised order, and it might not prove difficult to give an expansion here which would fit the letters, but until they are individually identified, any such attempt would be useless.¹

It must be confessed that all that has been advanced above is more or less guesswork, and extremely vague. It cannot be otherwise until a surer basis is established by identification of all the letters. Moreover, there will always be the difficulty arising from uncertainty of pronunciation, which equally in the Welsh (and here we seem to be on the Welsh fringe in Eastern Perthshire) as in Gaelic speech dominates the structure of a word and its grammar.

The reasons which led, as I said, to this communication being so long delayed arose from the hope that time would help to a transliteration being arrived at. That hope has not been realised. I am, however, sanguine that from publication this monument may yet yield up its message. It is only necessary to add in reference to the stone that although found in a churchyard it may be older than the churchyard.

[Since this paper was read to the Society, I have been informed that two eminent authorities have expressed doubt as to the inscription on the stone being ancient. One is of opinion that it is not older than the middle of the eighteenth century, assuming apparently that the second line gives the date 1750. The other concurs, giving details. He considers it to be the work of a "prentice hand—perhaps one of the family"; and further,

mysterious letters for "your pleasure"! The expansions have been variously interpreted, but the following are as given by Thomson.

The first line on the brass plate :—"Thomas Shepherd & The Working Band Will Thee Instruct What This Royal Arch Contains, For So Doing Your Pleasure."

The arched line :—"I William Clark Designed On The Other Side Came To Dundee In October 1793 Then In His Majesty's Service A Native Of Inverness A Lover Of All Good People And A Hater Of And Hated By Rogues." Gaelic :—"Remember Death."

A consideration of the inscription shows that the monument having been erected by husband and spouse in memory of their children, was probably put up sometime between 1827, the date of the last recorded of the family, and 1830, when "the mother of ten" died. Mrs Clark seems to have been survived by four of her family and by her husband, whose death does not appear on the stone. So that William Clark, who doubtless was responsible for the whole inscription, may have for several years enjoyed the mystifications of its message to the living, so very inappropriate to accompany his thirty-three years' record of family vicissitudes. It is worth noting, as shown by the dates, that Mrs Clark was only eighteen years of age when married, and nineteen when her son Nicholas was born.

¹ The main inscription on the Newton of Insch stone, extending to some forty-four characters, is accepted by the greatest living authorities as "in Roman minuscular forms," although by what seems strange inconsequence not a single character in that inscription has been identified with its Roman prototype (Dr Joseph Anderson's *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, 2nd series, pp. 220-1).

that the inscription may be the work of more than one person, and completed at different times. He considers the original inscription began with the three terminal letters C. W. G., which he reads C. M. G., commemorating, say, Charles Mac Gregor; and that the letters in front were added subsequently to commemorate, say, Alexander and Christian Mac Gregor, the queer symbols, Nos. 2 and 4, being the sculptor's attempt at a contraction for "and." Further, he regards the lower line as a date, indicating that one or more persons died in 1750, and another or others in 1751.

It will have been observed I had considered the suggestion of a modern origin, and discarded it for reasons adduced. Let us look into it a little more closely, in the light of the arguments advanced by my critic. In the first place, the putting the C. M. G. as the original inscription so close to the edge of the stone seems inconceivable, seeing the whole surface of the stone was available; and surely it cannot be argued that the sculptor foresaw what was to follow, and so left the exact space and no more on the left for subsequent initials? Second, the insertion in front of the first-recorded death of a record of subsequent deaths is most improbable, and contrary to all precedent. Third, the use of the conjunction symbol for "and" is quite in keeping with a record composed of initials, but it may be questioned how far it was likely to be employed by a "prentice hand." The symbol appears in cursive forms and in print at least as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century. There is an absence of information as to when it began to be used in sculpture. I have for many years given close attention to the lettering on old tombstones, but cannot recall an instance of any crude form of the symbol, certainly of no such unrecognisable figure as is here claimed to suggest that this symbol had been intended. If the graver here knew of the symbol at all, it was all the more necessary he should have made himself acquainted with its usual form, to which the figure he has made bears not the slightest resemblance. Whatever his disqualifications as a graver may have been, it may safely be assumed he was desirous his labours should be legible to those who were interested, surely some of whom would be able to read. Can we suppose that, having succeeded so well in forming A, C, and G, he could go so far astray in the reproduction of others, rather than that those others have been cut with like attention to form, although not identified?

As to the suggestion that more than one person has been at work on the inscription, it ought to be evident that weathering has had much to do in producing in the case of some of the letters an appearance of inferior treatment. The argument of two hands having been at work would seem to point to the recognisable and better-formed letters being the

work of one, while the unrecognisable letters are the work of the other, and inferior, hand; but if so, then we are faced by the contretemps that the two classes are alternated, and such a division of labour is inconceivable. Moreover, the fourth and fifth letters in their sharp V-cutting manifest a high degree of skilled workmanship; but on the one hand the fourth is one of the queer symbols upon which my critic bases his argument for a prentice hand, while the other forms one of the three which he considers to have formed the original inscription, and so again we are up against the unthinkable division of labour involved in my critic's argument.

As for the supposed date, no such form of 7 is known in any recognisable arrangement of figures due to that period. Throughout that and the preceding century the horizontal arm, here entirely wanting, was made almost as long as the down stroke—which, moreover, was always sloped, and not as here perpendicular. A like objection applies to the 5. Nowhere in any century can I find a 5 formed as here. Then the 0, whether it be regarded as figure or letter, in its oval form and diminutive size points to an ancient type.

The sculptor ought to have had no difficulty with the date, as doubtless contemporary local examples would be available for his guidance.

I have put forward with all deference my readings. It may be objected that in giving more than one I have virtually given away my case. I may be permitted to refer to the multiplicity of interpretations evoked by the hitherto unexplained bilingual inscriptions on the stone at Newton of Insch.]

The Perthshire place-name of Weem is believed to be derived from the Gaelic word *uaim*, a cave, there being in the face of the steep precipitous hill known as Weem Rock a cave, or rather there are two caves, one of them having a connection with St Cuthbert.

Authorities are divided as to which of the caves the parish owes its name. One of the caves has a very narrow entrance, and is believed to extend in a very long way, with an outlet, it is said, by the side of a small loch, two miles northwards, called Loch Glassie, connected with which a local ballad embalms a folklore tradition. This, doubtless, would be the originating cave of the place-name, and well known in the district long before St Cuthbert's name could have been attached to the other, which is really no cave at all in the strict sense, but merely a shallow recess in the rock-face, and with a rocky shelf or platform a few feet in width in front. Here, it is said, St Cuthbert resided for some time, and the attribution to Cuthbert remains a tradition here to the present day. Latterly its name was changed to St David's Cave or

Chapel;¹ out of regard, it was said, to the memory of a Sir David Menzies, who became a monk and died in 1449. By whose agency he was canonised is not known; moreover, no "St David Menzies" appears in any calendar of Scottish saints.

The Rev. James M'Diarmed, who wrote the description of the parish which appears in the *Statistical Account* (1794), in referring to the name Weem, says: "It is derived from a remarkable cave in a high rocky bank near the parish church, but of which from the falling in of the earth or some other accident no vestige now remains."

It is difficult to know precisely what the writer of this paragraph meant, since the entrance to the cave is still quite open, although difficult of access, and perhaps the falling away of the rock below the entrance may have increased the difficulty of the ascent, so that he had never seen the entrance to the cave himself; or he may have referred to an internal blocking up from falls from the roof, although his language could scarcely warrant this interpretation. He makes no mention of St Cuthbert or of St David.

I visited the cave some forty years ago under the guidance of Rev. John M'Lean, minister of Grantully, a well-known authority, and native of the district, who related to me the legend above referred to. I was anxious to enter the cave there and then, but he dissuaded me from attempting it because of the steepness of the descent, and a twist a short way down which placed, he told me, the remainder of it in darkness, and suggested that if I wished to explore it I should do so in an old suit of clothes and provided with lights; but the opportunity never recurred. Evidently my guide had never heard of any blocking up. M'Diarmed's statement, however, proves that the place name of Weem was in his time (1794) believed to be derived from this and not from St Cuthbert's Cave, which is certainly not blocked up but remains in its original state as described in the *Life of that Saint*, as I shall now proceed to show.

St Cuthbert's connection with Weem is established by the *Irish Life*, which appears to have been known to the monks of Durham as early as the fourteenth century. Skene relates the connection thus:—²

"After the blessed youth Cuthbert had arrived in Scottish land he began to dwell in different parts of the country, and coming to a town called Dul [Dull] forsook the world and became a solitary. Not more than a mile from it there is in the woods a high and steep mountain

¹ Skene says, "St David seems to have superseded St Cuthbert here," and significantly adds, "the fair (of St David) was held in March." St Cuthbert's day is 20th March (*Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 207).

² *Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 206.

called by the inhabitants Doil-weme [Dull-weem], and on its summit he began to lead a solitary life, where he brings from the hard rock a fountain of water which still exists. Here too he erected a large stone cross, builds an oratory of wood, and out of a single stone, not far from the cross, constructs a bath, in which he used to immerse himself and spend the night in prayer, which bath still exists on the summit of the mountain."

The description here given still applies, only that the cave is about half-way up the rock, certainly not on the summit. On my visit above mentioned, Mr M'Lean also accompanied me to St Cuthbert's Cave.

It is of easy access: a winding path from the east end of the old church leads to the cave, which is just deep enough to afford shelter from rain, but open to a southerly gale, when it would be utterly untenable, hence doubtless "the oratory of wood" which Cuthbert is said to have erected, and which would presumably have afforded the shelter required. The stone bath, hollowed out of the rock, extends along the eastern side of the recess, and the "fountain of water" referred to in the legend is led in from the west side of the recess by a channel cut in the rock, which along with the formation of the bath may or may not have been the work of Cuthbert. The same may be said of the Latin cross cut in relief on a stone slab, and attributed to the Saint. At the time of my visit this cross lay on the shelving rock in front of the cave. The author of the *White and Red Book of Menzies* describes it as a "Celtic" cross, and says it stands upright in the bath, in which case it must have been so placed since my last visit. He gives an illustration of the cross, which shows no evidence of the cross being of Celtic origin.

With reference to the "oratory of wood," I may mention that the rock platform was partly enclosed by rustic wood framework, and I was told it had been always kept so by the proprietor, partly as a protection, because the place had been fitted up as a summer-house to which visitors could be taken; moreover, many also of the older inhabitants of the surrounding country used to visit the well for the water, which was believed to be endowed with healing qualities, and I have been told that small coins and pins were cast into the bath, and bits of rags hung on the bushes around by those votaries of health. I can speak for the pins and rags, but never saw any coins. Doubtless the bath would be carefully searched from time to time for any valuables by those to whom the movements of the votaries in question would be under constant espionage.

Before concluding, it seems desirable to consider the "St David" ascription, which I have already characterised as of modern origin; but the evidences on which the conclusion is based ought to be stated.

The connection of Cuthbert with Weem rests solely on the Irish Life

of that Saint. It is remarkable that Bede, who was born in the lifetime of Cuthbert, whose life he records, and must have been about thirteen years old when he died, makes no reference to the Weem connection. Skene, in discussing this point, suggests that certain persons to whom Bede states he submitted his manuscript, that they might read it and correct or expunge what they judged advisable, had deleted this portion of the manuscript. Moreover, it may be remarked, Bede tells nothing of the birth and parentage of the Saint, which the Irish Life professes to give, and it seems probable that the causes which operated to exclude reference to the Weem episode, led also to the absence of details affecting his nationality. Skene assigns to the ten years between 651, when Cuthbert removed to the monastery of Melrose, and the year 661, during which period Bede gives no particulars of Cuthbert's life, the events recorded in connection with Weem. The Life records that while residing at Melrose Cuthbert "was zealous in converting the surrounding populace, and frequently went out from the monastery, sometimes on horseback, but more generally on foot, and preached the way of truth to those who were in error. He was also wont to seek out and preach in those remote villages which were situated far from the world in wild mountain places and fearful to behold, and which, as well by their poverty as by their distance up the country, prevented intercourse between them and such as could instruct their inhabitants. Abandoning himself willingly to this pious work, Cuthbert cultivated these remote districts and people with so much zeal and learning that sometimes he did not return to his monastery for an entire month, remaining all the time in the mountains."

These references to "remote villages," and "wild mountain places up the country," go far to support the Weem tradition. Bishop Forbes (*Kalendars of Scottish Saints*) mentions Cuthbert's evangelising missions to the barbarous people in remote villages, but assigns the Weem episode to a more youthful period. Forbes gives Weem as one of Cuthbert's churches in Scotland, but quotes the very modern authority of the *New Statistical Account*, in support of a St David well and chapel at Weem, as owing their ascription to the monkish Laird of Weem, apparently unaware that this well and chapel are the bath and "oratory" of the Cuthbert tradition. He further expresses his opinion that this ascription as well as all other Celtic dedications to St David must be attributed to an Irish priest named Dabius or Davius, who had a Scottish connection. Now, all the Celtic David associations in Strath-tay are confined to the south side of the river Tay, whereas Weem is on the north side, where there is no proof that any such association ever existed.

The *Book of Menzies* ignores Cuthbert's connection with Weem, and claims cave, stone cross, bath, chapel on the rock, as well as the parish church for the so-called "St David Menzies," but allows that the Feile Daidh (David's Fair) was held on the opposite side of the river Tay before it was removed to Kenmore.

Mr Duncan Campbell, the author of the *Book of Garth and Fortingal* (Inverness, 1888), on the other hand, identifies the local St David with the patron saint of Wales, who he says "may have been at Finlarg, at west end of Loch Tay, for within about a mile is situated Cladh-Math-Dabhi, the churchyard of St David, the proper name being to the present time pronounced in Welsh fashion Davee." Besides the place-names mentioned, there is another, not anywhere noted so far as I can find, Dundavie, which conforms to the same pronunciation, a mile or two below Aberfeldy, also on south side of Tay. Campbell, who was a native of Glenlyon, and well acquainted with the district, says nothing about a St David ascription at Weem. He, indeed, while acknowledging the dedication of the church at Weem to St Cuthbert, ascribes it not to the hermitage-discipline in the cave at Weem Rock, but to the after policy of Adamnan, whose influence was strong, and still is much in evidence in Glenlyon, Dull, and Grantully. St Cuthbert was converted to the Roman Catholic views of Easter and the tonsure, and in his advocacy of these views joined actively in the establishment of the parochial system. If, as suggested by Bishop Forbes, the cave experiences of Cuthbert came in his early manhood, it seems not improbable that, as supposed by Skene, he revisited Weem during some of those Melrose excursions, of which we have been told, to "wild mountain places." In them he would have opportunity of advocating the new views, with little doubt seconded by Aidan, who was in favour of them, and whose influence extended to Glenlyon, where stood the church and churchyard of Inch-Aidan. This was the ancient name of the parish itself, "Kenmore being but a recent innovation which met with little popular acceptance until the residence of the minister was removed, and the church and churchyard of St Aidan had ceased to exist," the removal taking place about the middle of the eighteenth century. St Cuthbert died in 687. Adamnan, who was deeply imbued with the same views, and who survived Cuthbert for seventeen years, would find it a congenial task to take up here the advocacy of that movement which was at last effected in the era of Queen Margaret.

In further elucidation of the David dedication of Weem, it has been contended that it may be a question whether there are any David dedications at all in this district. That, in fact, they are assignable to a saint whose name is phonetically rendered as "Bhi," pronounced Vee;

the local pronunciation, which cannot be ignored, being not David but Da-vee, the "Da" being the Celtic form of "Mo," so common as a prefix in the names of early saints. Mr J. M. Mackinlay, in his *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland*, identifies Dabhi with Mobhi, also an Irish saint. He says the latter had two dedications in Breadalbane district of Perthshire, but instead of the honorific "Mo" in the honorific "Da," producing the forms Dabhi and Davius, and he remarks in a note that in dedications to St Mobhi the accent is on the last syllable.

The *New Statistical Account* (Edinburgh, 1834-45) would seem to be the earliest literary reference to the ascription of the well and church at Weem to "St David." This bears out statements current among old people in the district in the middle of last century that the ascription to St David arose and "caught on" from someone having inadvertently used the term St David for Sir David¹—a sort of metathesis not uncommon in place-names. Dr Joyce (*Irish Names of Places*, second series, p. 22) cites a case in Ireland where an old church owing its name to an Irish Bishop Sanctan or Santan, who founded it, is now changed to St Ann, and the picturesque little graveyard and ruin is called "Kill St Ann" or St Ann's Church; near it is "St Ann's Well"; and an adjacent residence has borrowed from the church the name of "Ann Mount." The whole place has been, in fact, quietly given over to St Ann, who has not the least claim to it, and an old Irish saint has been dispossessed of his rightful inheritance; moreover, the error has been perpetuated in the maps of the Ordnance Survey. A still more remarkable instance, in this case a double metathesis, occurs near Leuchars, Fifeshire, where a place-name, Sandfurd or Sandford,² has become St Fort, and given that

¹ The "Laird of Weyme" is named in a Roll of the Names of Landowners in the Highlands and Isles, dated 1587 (*Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, the Iona Club, p. 35). He is, in a note, explained to be "James Menzies of that Ilk, or of Weyme, proprietor of certain lands in Breadalbane, Strathtay, and Rannoch." Also, "the laird of Weym" is referred to (1512) in the *Rentall Dunkeldense*, Scottish History Society, second series.

² Dr Campbell (*Balmerino and its Abbey*) says: "Sandford, or St Fort, was written Saintfoord as early as 1446, according to Sibbald (*Hist. of Fife*, p. 262, ed. 1803), but it is doubtful if this spelling is that of the original document." The Doctor adds in a note, p. 490, "When, if ever, or where such a saint lived does not appear."

Alexander Nairne obtained a crown charter of Sandfurde in 1625. His initials, with the date 1647, appear on a stone panel along with a rhyming epitaph on a burial vault within a small triangular enclosure in what was known as the "Tomb Park," about 100 yards north from St Fort railway station. Sandford probably took its name from a ford on the Motray Burn, a sluggish stream close below the site of the old house of Sandfurd-Nairn, the foundations of which may yet be seen beneath the turf in the Tomb Park. The house would appear to have been of cottage form, since it is so referred to in a rhyming inscription along with the initials "A N" and date "1643" on a stone panel resembling that on the vault. The latter presumably formed the lintel over the mansion-house door. I have been told that it was carried off by a builder in Newport, and inserted above the entrance to a house there having crow-stepped gables, erected to serve as the "Dowager-house" of Tayfield. A drawing of this panel by the present writer is inserted in Campbell's *Balmerino and its Abbey*.

name to a station on the railway between Dundee and Edinburgh; and not only so, but this misnomer has in turn resulted in a small inn at the junction of cross roads in the near neighbourhood, kept by one Michael Irvine, and known popularly as Michael's Inn at St Fort, coming to be known throughout the whole district and far and wide as "St Michael's Inn," a wood near by has become "St Michael's Wood," and these names appear on the Ordnance maps; so that no less than two saints—one entirely novel to the calendar—have attained to an abiding hold in that district.

St David of Weem may be safely relegated to the same category of fictitious ascriptions.