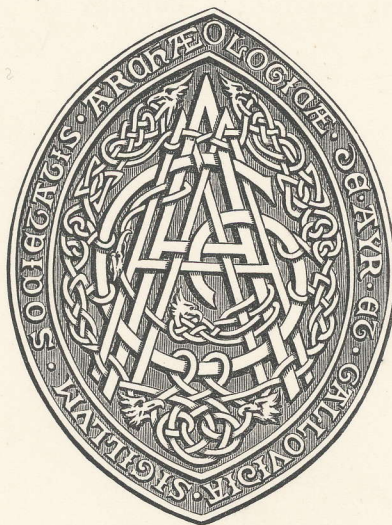


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VIII.

DUNDONALD

ITS CHURCH, ITS BELL, AND SURROUNDINGS.

DUNDONALD—one of the prettiest and perhaps the most picturesque village in Ayrshire, is supposed to have derived its name from the hill on which its castle stands. Dun signifying a tower, or fortlet, and Donald the name of the owner or chief to which it belonged. At what period the tower was erected remains still unchronicled, and even tradition is silent. There is, however, a legend of the sixth century which narrates—according to Skene's *Celtic Scotland*—that St. Monenna or Modena, who was consecrated as a Virgin by St. Patrick, and who is said—according to one version of

the legend—to have founded seven churches in Scotland, viz. one at Ghilnecase in Galloway, a second on the hill of Dundonald in Ayrshire, a third on Dumbarton rock, a fourth at Stirling, a fifth at Edinburgh, a sixth at St. Andrews, and a seventh at Longforgan. In the *Life of Modena* by Conchubrano, it is stated of her in Chapter VII. that “Pervenerat etiam in Albaniam (id est Scotiam) in qua ædificaverat Ecclesias in Christi nomine, quarum hæc sunt nomina. Una est Ghilnecase in Galweia. Altera vero in cacumine montis qui appellatur Dunduel quia semper solebat sicut prædicamus, ut supra nudam petram nudis membris in noctibus oraret Deum qui semper orandus est sicut scriptura ait, ‘Orate sine intermissione,’ et reliqua.”

It appears to have been during the twelfth or thirteenth century that Dundonald first formed a part of national history, and then as one of the seats of royalty in Scotland.

Walter (3) the Stewart, styled of Dundonald, was made Justiciary of Scotland by Alexander the Second at St. Andrews in 1230. Robert the Second occasionally resided there from 1371 till his death in 1390; when his son Robert the Third sometime resided, and is reported to have died there. Some of his royal successors may have also resided there or visited it occasionally till the time of James the Fourth. In 1482 the first Lord Cathcart obtained the custody of the castle, and it may have been during his custodianship that the church founded by St. Modena gave place to one of a crucial form at the south end of the village, in which the old Bell was placed, and did duty for upwards of three hundred years. In 1803-5 a new church was built on the site of the old one, and the bell continued to do duty till 1840, in which year it was proposed to place a clock in the steeple, when a larger bell became necessary. That was at length obtained, and the old bell taken down with a view to being disposed of. A sketch of its birth and life history having been brought under the notice of the late Colonel Crawford of Newfield, he secured the bell; and after his death in 1841, it was by his widow, in 1843, forwarded to the late John Alexander in Dundonald to be presented by him to the Free Kirk, or disposed of at his pleasure. After doing duty in the Free Kirk for upwards of forty years, a part of its cup front gave way; a new bell was procured, and the old one, for a consideration, returned to the family of the late Mr. Alexander, by whom it has been sent on loan for exhibition to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh. The bell is $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height to the top of the

cañons, and $16\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter across the mouth. Round the shoulder the circumference is $27\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and $31\frac{3}{4}$ inches round the waist, below the monogram. The inscription reads "✠ SANCTE EGIDIE ORA PRO NOBIS ANNO D^M M^o CCCC^o LXXXXV^{to}." The weight of the bell is about 96 or 97 pounds. The tongue is of iron. The mark X T is also on a bell of about the same date at Broxburn.

Several archæological discoveries on a small scale have been made during recent years in and around the village. A stone Hammer was found, nearly fifty years ago, near Drybridge, in the field where there is a stone pillar. Possession of the hammer was obtained by Dr. Munro, who placed that relic in the Burns Monument, Kilmarnock. A small stone Lamp was found in a garden on the east side of the village; and a piece of old Bronze in another garden on the west side, forming a segment of a circle, and weighing nearly four pounds. A bronze Pot was found five or six years ago on the Corraith grounds, by Mr. Bruce, farmer, Langholm, in whose possession it still remains.

A so-called Roman Bath has been known, for the past sixty years, to exist on the Newfield estate, at Boghead Farm, and was on the point of being opened up in 1841, when the death of the proprietor stopped the proceedings. An attempt has been made, October 1893, to lay it open, but it has not been sufficiently cleaned out yet to enable a future historian to describe it.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, M.D.

