

#### IV.

NOTE OF THE OCCURRENCE OF CUP-MARKED STONES IN ST  
PALLADIUS'S CHAPEL, FORDOUN. BY REV. JOHN MENZIES, MINISTER  
OF FORDOUN.

In April of this year, while examining the masonry of St Palladius's Chapel in the churchyard of Fordoun, with the view of determining whether it did not bear traces of different dates, I lighted upon two stones in the north wall distinctly cup-marked, and in a manner not previously familiar to me. I had heard of two instances of cup-marks being found on slabs which had been used as gravestones, but this was the first instance I had either heard of or seen, of stones so marked built into or along with the wall of a Christian church. They lay on the same level in the wall, 30 inches above the surface of the ground—from the east end of the chapel to the east end of the east stone 21 feet 9 inches, and from the west end of the chapel to the same point 24 feet—so that the interstice between the two, filled up with lime, is the centre of the building. This will be clearly seen when I give their dimensions.

The walls of the chapel are built in the common rubble style—none of the stones except those forming the corners, sills, and jambs of windows and doors bearing any mark of designed dressing. There is not the slightest approach to ashlar or even coursed work. The stones are uneven in length and thickness, and piled up in the most irregular

fashion. One feature of good masonry, with the one exception to be stated below, is preserved throughout. The vertical interstices between any two stones are crossed by one above, and this is secured in the usual way, where two are not of the same height, by placing not regularly, but in a kind of dovetail or overlapping style, roughly chipped bits or laminated sandstone imbedded in mortar over the lower to bring it to the required level.

With this general feature of the building in our eye, a very cursory glance discloses a difference in the masonry where the two marked stones are found. At this point the wall bulges out slightly—a feature not to be seen anywhere else in the chapel, and for which, if not purposely designed, no reason can be given.

Looking now at the stones themselves, we observe that they are of the common red sandstone of the district. The prominent feature on the face of them is the cup-marks, in regard to which nothing need be said but that they are of the ordinary size and style to be found over the country.

The stone No. 1 is 11 inches in height and 12 inches in breadth, while No. 2 is 11 inches in height and 14 inches in breadth.

No. 1 has its end chamfered to a plane about an inch in width; and a similar feature, though not so distinctly, is to be observed on the west end on No. 2. It is scarcely possible that this could be accidental or natural. There is no other example of such chamfer or corner-planing in the chapel, save in the outer jambs and lintels of the windows and doors.

On No 1 are five cup-marks. One is solitary, the remaining four are joined in unequally-yoked pairs by a shallow but well-defined scoop, forming a kind of indented unevenly-balanced dumb-bell.

From the following notes of their measurements it will be seen that the three larger cups are alike in diameter and depth, while the two smaller vary in depth by  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch, and the shallower is connected with the shallower joining. It is noticeable also that the position of the paired cups is reversed, the smaller cup being to the east in the one case and to the west in the other.

## No. I.

- (a)  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter,  
1 inch to centre of cup in depth.
- (b) Same as (a).  
1 inch in depth.
- (c)  $1\frac{1}{2}$  " diameter,  
 $\frac{5}{8}$  " depth.
- Joining between (b) and (c),  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in depth,  
1 " long.
- (d) Same as (a) and (b) in diameter,  
" (b) in depth 1 inch.
- (e) " (c) in diameter  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch,  
 $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in depth,
- Joining between (d) and (e) same as  
between (b) and (c); immaterially  
shallower.

## No. II.

- (f) and (g) same size,  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter,  
 $\frac{3}{8}$  " depth.
- (h) Slightly oblong,  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in breadth,  
 $1\frac{7}{8}$  " perpendicularly,  
 $\frac{3}{8}$  " in depth.
- (i) Seems a chip out of the stone, and  
gradually rounded by the elements.
- (k) Is distinctly a cup broken into two  
by a chip from the lower edge of  
the stone.  
 $1\frac{7}{8}$  inch in diameter.

It will be noticed that the depths of the smaller cups except *c*, are the same, and if we make some allowance for *h* having been probably chipped on one edge and weather-worn into a slight oblong, we may set them down as originally alike.

It is, I think, very unusual to have such stones in a chapel wall, and it seems to me that, taking into account their position, their edge, and cup-

marks, and the peculiarity of the masonry about them, we cannot help concluding that they who built them into the wall attached to them some meaning or mystery, if not both.