

I.

NOTICES OF SOME OF THE ABBOTS OF KINLOSS, AND OF A VOLUME WHICH BELONGED SUCCESSIVELY TO ROBERT REID, ONE OF THE ABBOTS; WILLIAM GORDON, BISHOP OF ABERDEEN; AND JOHN LESLIE, BISHOP OF ROSS. BY JOHN STUART, Esq., Sec. S.A. Scot.

The Abbey of Kinloss was founded by David I., King of the Scots, in the year 1150.

According to the tradition of the Abbey, as preserved by Ferrerius, the King, while engaged in a hunting expedition, lost his way in a thick wood; and while in extremity, and in answer to his prayers, he received the guidance of a white dove, by following which he was led to an open spot, where he found two shepherds tending their flocks. From these he received food and shelter. During the night, he was warned in a

dream that he should there erect a chapel in honour of the blessed Virgin, by whose ready aid he had been preserved; and on rising from sleep, and revolving the tenor of his dream, he resolved to act on it, and, drawing his sword, he marked out on the green sward the chapel which he vowed to erect. The King then went to the castle of Duffus, accompanied by his nobles; and after communicating to them his vision and consequent vow, he called the architects and masons engaged on royal works in various places, in order that the foundation of Kinloss might forthwith be proceeded with. To secure the uninterrupted progress of the work the King remained during the summer at Duffus; and when he was called away by other affairs before the completion of the Abbey, he sent to Melrose for a monk, whom he set in charge over his builders and the rising monastery, of which he afterwards was made the first abbot.

It may be doubted whether this story of the white dove and the subsequent vision was not invented in after days, perhaps to compete with the legend which connects the foundation of Holyrood by David with the spot where he was miraculously delivered from an enraged stag by the intervention of the Holy Cross.

In any event, it were a pity to deprive the saintly David of the real merit of the action, which was the result of that policy by which he hoped to humanize his subjects, and of the unfailing piety by which he meant to honour God.

We gather, however, from the surer testimony of Charter record, the personal interest of the good king in the work, as we find that he gave to his new foundation not only the lands of Kinloss and Inverlochty, but in addition the land which the king himself perambulated "as the brook falls into Maffath, and as the marsh runs down to the wood," and the land on which stood a Scottish mill; also the wood of Inche Damin, by those bounds which the King David pointed out before the Bishop of Caithness, and other good men.<sup>1</sup>

To the foundation thus made, other kings and nobles made additional grants, although the abbey never attained anything like the wealth and importance of some of those southern institutions which took their rise in the same age. In 1561 its revenues were returned as L.1152, 1s.

<sup>1</sup> Cart. Confirm. regis Alexandri, A.D. 1226. Regist. Morav., p. 457.

Scots; 47 chalders 11 bolls 1 firloft 3 pecks bear and meal; 10 bolls 3 firlofts oats; 34 wedders, 41 geese, 60 capons, and 125 poultry.

Edward I. spent part of the autumn of 1303 in the monastery of Kinloss; and Ferrerius preserves the tradition, that, during the years of their occupation, the English consumed 60 chalders of malt, which he thinks an impossible quantity for the place to have furnished, unless it had been brought from other places, and used for food as well as in drinking.

About thirty-three years after this time, the Abbey was visited by Edward III., on his expedition, in the summer of that year, to relieve the young Countess of Atholl, who had been besieged during the previous winter in the castle of Lochindorb. On his march through the wilds of Badenoch he suffered from want of provisions. Two days after, he reached Kinloss, where, as we learn from a contemporary account, he found wine, ale, salt fish, corn, and other necessaries for his followers, who are said to have been thereby "*refecti et non modicum consolati.*"<sup>1</sup>

In the hope that it may interest the members to examine a volume which belonged successively to three prelates (one of them an abbot of Kinloss), who in different ways made some figure in our Scottish history about the time of the Reformation, I have brought it for their inspection, and taken the opportunity of throwing together a few notices, as well of Kinloss as of the book and its owners.

The volume, which is a fôlio of considerable thickness, contains the works of George Wicelius, a German divine, who at first joined Luther, but becoming disgusted, went back to his old church, for which Luther persecuted him, and procured his imprisonment. The first part contains his Postils on the Epistles and Gospels, "*de tempore et de sanctis,*" throughout the year. It is printed at Cologne in 1553, and extends to 991 pages.

The second work in the volume contains Expositions of the Gospels, Epistles, and other lessons used in the office of Mass during Lent. It contains 290 pages, and is printed at Cologne in the month of February 1555.

<sup>1</sup> Nova de Scotia, 1336; printed in Ferrerius, p. 19.

The style of the treatises is mostly devotional and practical; but occasionally the author takes an opportunity of exposing what he calls the pestilent heresies of the Lutherans. His works seem to have commended themselves to those of our reformed clergy who wished to find out some scheme which should comprehend the Church of Rome with the Protestants. William Forbes, the first bishop of Edinburgh, often said, that if there had been more like Cassander and Wicelius, there would have been no need for Luther and Calvin.

It derives some interest, as indicating the class of works collected by such a man as Reid, and as one which was afterwards the subject of special gift by the Bishop of Ross.

On the title-page of the volume is written, in a contemporary hand, "Liber Reverendi Patris Vilhelmi Gordonii Episcopi Aberd. Ex dono Johannis Leslie Episcopi Rossen. moderni." The same inscription is also twice repeated, in different handwriting, on a fly-leaf at the end of the volume. On each of the boards is the book-stamp of Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney. It is of an oval shape, having in the centre the family crest of the Reids—a stag's head, surmounted by a mitre, with the motto "*Moderate*" below. Surrounding this is the inscription, ✠ ROBERTVS REID . EPVS . ORCHADEN . ET ABBAS A KYNLOS 1558.

Bishop Reid died in September 1558; and the volume seems then to have become the property of John Leslie, at that time official of the See of Aberdeen, who afterwards, in 1566, was appointed Bishop of Ross.

Bishop Reid was a man of great learning and liberal genius; and every place to which his fortunes carried him bore marks of his energetic and improving hand. According to Ferrerius, he was nominated successor to Thomas Chrystal in the Abbacy of Kinloss in 1526. In the following year he went to Rome to obtain the necessary writs for his promotion; and we learn the circumstances of his coming to take possession from a diary kept by John Smyth, a monk of Kinloss, the original of which is now in the Harleian Library—"Anno M° V° xxxix° In translacione Sancti Benedicti Magister Robertus Red subdecanus et officialis Moravie et vicarius de Gartle et Bruntkyrk et vicarius de Kyrk-caldy recepit habitum Cisterciens. in Edinburgo ab episcopo Aberdonen. et benedictus ab eodem venit ad Kynloss et receptus honorifice ut decebat

2° die Augusti a monachis et eorum obediencias secundum tenorem bul-  
larum Summi Pontificis recepit."<sup>1</sup>

The same monk has recorded that Abbot Thomas, the predecessor of Reid, got the latter to bring from France many fine books in 1529, whose titles are in the catalogue; and Ferrerius tell us that, in 1538, Abbot Reid erected a handsome fire-proof library, and covered the church with lead. We get a glimpse from the same author of a portion of the contents of the general library. Works of Cicero and Aristotle often occur along with those of some of the dogmatic writers of the middle ages, such as those of Peter Lombard, and there are many on philosophy and rhetoric. Among the books procured by Abbot Reid, and kept in the new library for the use of the students, the first is the Old and New Testament in six volumes, with the works of St Jerome, St Ambrose, St Chrysostom, St Augustine, St Bernard, and some of the schoolmen, such as Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>2</sup>

The monk of Kinloss has recorded the elevation of Abbot Reid to the episcopate: "On 27 Nov. 1541, the said Robert Reid, created Bishop of Orkney, and consecrated in the place of the Minors of Edinburgh on the first Sunday of Advent." He was made Lord President of the Court of Session about the end of 1548; and on many occasions he was employed on foreign embassies and other diplomatic affairs. As Bishop of Orkney he endowed a school at Kirkwall, added to the Bishop's Palace, and adorned the cathedral with some tasteful additions. In 1544 he founded various offices in the cathedral of Orkney; and his deed of foundation may be referred to as containing the latest regulations on such subjects, previous to the commencement of the new order of things at the Reformation. It is printed in the Appendix to Peterkin's "Rentals of Orkney." Nor did he confine his benefactions to the localities where he exercised his functions; for it was a bequest made by Bishop Reid for the foundation of a college in Edinburgh that enabled the magistrates, in 1581, to purchase from the provost of the Kirk of Field the ground

<sup>1</sup> MS. No. 5355, entitled "Var. de Ord. Cisterc. apud Scotos," &c. Transcript by General Hutton. "Dominus Joannes Smyth nuper subprior jam monachorum confessor simul et bursarius," was made a monk in the time of Abbot Thomas Crystall, predecessor of Thomas Reid. (Ferrerius, p. 37.)

<sup>2</sup> Ferrer. Hist. pp. 43-46. Bann. Club, Edin. 1839. 4to.

on which were subsequently erected the buildings of the University of Edinburgh.

Adam Elder, another monk of Kinloss, has preserved a notice of Walter Reid, a nephew of the Bishop of Orkney, in a volume of discourses which he published and dedicated to this prelate in 1558,<sup>1</sup> the year of his death. In an introductory notice, dated in that year, prefixed to his discourses; which were delivered in the chapter at Kinloss, Elder refers to two letters which he had recently written to the bishop, giving him an account among other things of the welfare of his nephew, Walter Reid, abbot of Kinloss. He is described as a youth; and his progress in learning Greek and Latin is stated to be satisfactory. His other pursuits had also been described in the letters, and are again referred to: "Sed et linguarum earundem cognitione non contemnenda jam habita asseveraveram eum trino etiam philosophiæ generi, rationali, morali, et naturali, non segniter aut defunctorie, sed totis et corporis et ingenii nervis invigilare. Subinde vero eundem in disciplina morum atque vitæ honestate suis majoribus vitæ et morum probitate merito laudatis, non dissimilem esse, ubique et semper præbere. Tum denique de nonnullis rebus aliis quæ tunc temporis apud nos gerebantur reverentiam tuam sedulo ammonueram."

This reference, along with others in Smyth's diary, enables us to amplify a notice of the abbots of Kinloss, prefixed to the History of Ferrerius already quoted, and to add one to their number. It is there stated that Robert Reid retained the abbacy *in commendam* till the time of his death. It will be seen, however, that his nephew Walter is described as abbot in 1558, when Elder wrote his preface; and two notices by Smyth enable us to fix the date of his accession to the dignity: "6 April 1553. Walter Red Abbas de Kynloss recepit obedienciam monachorum;" and ten days thereafter, "fuit solempniter et honorifice benedictus in eodem monasterio per reverendum in Christo Patrem Robertum Red Episcopum Orchaden." As he was only a youth, however, at his studies at Paris when Elder wrote his dedication, it is possible that

<sup>1</sup> Adami Senioris Scoti, monachi ordinis Cisterciensis, Monasterii Kynlossensis, ad Reverendum in Christi Patrem ac Dominum, Dominum Robertum Reid, Orchadum Præsulem Strenæ, sive Conciones Capitulares. Parisiis, ex typographia Matthæi Davidis, via Amygdalina ad veritatis insigne. 1558. 4to.

Walter Reid had not then taken actual possession of the abbacy. His name does not appear in the list of abbots; and it is said that, on the death of Robert Reid in 1558, he was succeeded as abbot by Walter Hetton, a monk and cantor of the abbey.

It may be mentioned, before leaving Bishop Reid, that in 1538 he employed, on various works, a famous painter, Andrew Bairtrum, of whom Ferrerius complains that he was crabbed, weak in mind, and lame in both feet. Perhaps, however, we must take this with some limitation, for it would appear that Ferrerius was in the way of quarrelling with his neighbours, and saying very sharp things of them. As a specimen of his humour, and of the little differences which arose in monasteries of old, I may quote a letter which he wrote concerning Adam Elder, the monk whose work has been quoted above, and the cause for which arose thus:—Five monks of Beaully, a priory in Ross-shire, which was held *in commendam* by Robert Reid, had spent three years at Kinloss in studying under Ferrerius, who at their departure made gifts to them of some of his own books. It so happened that the monk Adam Elder had carried off the Lives of Plutarch belonging to Ferrerius, and that this was one of the books which he had gifted away. He accordingly wrote to Elder to return the book to the person for whom it was intended. Elder not only refused to do so, but alleged that Ferrerius was not possessed of a single volume but what he had bought with the Abbot's money. This having been reported to Ferrerius, he wrote to his correspondent, Thomas Tognius, a monk of Beaully: "What you write of Adam Elder does not much surprise me. I had indeed thought, that as he drinks milk and water in these days he would become less foolish, but he goes on, I perceive, always like himself. The argument which he uses against my books is like a man weak in the loins; for it does not follow that a book belongs to a man although his name may be prefixed, in the same way as you and your colleagues, for nearly three years, bore here the cowl of the Cistercian order when you were of a different profession, for a considerable number of the books have the name of Abbot Thomas affixed by Sir James Pont, when truly they were the books of Abbot Robert. It is false that they were all bought with the Abbot's money, when even before I had seen the face of the Abbot, I had more books at Paris, and brought more into Scotland at my first coming, than the Abbot himself

had ; and when I was occupied at Court, I bought not a few at Edinburgh with my own money. Lastly, what I have bought at Paris during almost the whole of the last four years many at Kinloss can bear witness, who saw what I brought with me at my second coming, which, if you rightly compute, almost a half is mine, bought with my own money. Was the money which I had before I knew the Abbot never my own ? or that which I have since acquired by my own labours ? More justly are these my property than that which Adam turns to his own use, by the piecemeal sale of cabbages from the garden entrusted to him, without the Abbot's permission. I indeed am of no profession but that of Christ, and what my labours yield are my own ; whatever a monk acquires, belongs not to himself but to his monastery. That I have most frequently placed the Abbot's name in the books, this is to be attributed to my love for him, as I might wish all things to be common among friends. But I ask you with what front or face does he daily approach the altar in so manifest and so bitter a falsehood ? May Christ bring it to pass that he henceforth judge more truly of my affairs. In the meantime, take care again to claim, through your Superior, the Plutarch which, with a proper title, I presented to you on your departure from this place." At all events, Bairtrum the artist was employed at Kinloss for three years, during which time he painted three "Tabulæ," or altar-pieces, for three chapels in the church—one of the Magdalene, another of St John the Evangelist, and another of St Thomas of Canterbury. He also painted "*Sed pictura levior quæ nunc est per Scotium receptissima,*" a chamber and oratory of the Abbot, as well as a larger chamber before the step in the way to the Abbot's chamber.

Moreover, the Abbot brought over from Dieppe a skilful gardener, called William Lubias, whose good deeds in spreading a knowledge of his art not only in the neighbourhood, but also throughout the whole of Moray, are duly chronicled by Ferrerius. But even here we discover a trait of the writer's temper ; for after commemorating the good qualities of the gardener, he adds, "Nor is there anything more to be wished for in a man so famous and energetic, unless it be his other foot, which he lost by the wound from a bombard, while fighting under Francis I. in a naval action against the Spaniards, near Marseilles."

It is added, that the gardener was skilled in chirurgery, and that he



healed many wounds, during five years, through the whole of Moray. There are many entries in Smyth's Diary, which serve to show that the calls on his surgical skill were probably very frequent; for in one year we hear of the burning of Daviot by the Mackintoshes, the devastation by the Earls of Moray and Huntly of the lands of the Clan Chattan, and the beheading at Forres of their chief captain. Twice also were the cloisters of the Abbey defiled, apparently by deeds of blood: on 17th November 1529, the cloister was reconciled by Mr James Hay, bishop of Ross, when "benedixit eucharistiam majorem;" and on 15th February 1553, the cloister was again reconciled "honorifice," by Bishop Robert Reid.

Under Abbot Thomas Chrystall, we learn from Ferrerius, that John Gordon, eldest son of Alexander, Earl of Huntly, on the 27th December 1515, broke into the Monastery of Kinloss, and forced open a box belonging to a lady called Margaret Mouat, in which were preserved writings and money belonging to her. He proceeded to France with his spoils, but his bad conscience not allowing him to live there, he returned to Scotland, and could rest nowhere except at Kinloss, in which place he died, two years after the commission of his crime, affording an example to all sacrilegious persons.<sup>1</sup> Those who were his partners in guilt soon after all died basely, except James Dunbar of Tarbate, who repented and obtained pardon.

We may glance, in passing, at a few additional notices of the Abbots and Monks of Kinloss preserved by Ferrerius, as such little passages serve more than anything else to give us something like a picture of the state of society at the time.

In the time of Abbot James Guthry, who died in 1482, David Eliot received the tonsure. He bought or transcribed many ritual books necessary for the students, and bought, for the Chapel of St John the Evangelist, the image of the Evangelist.

William Butter also became a monk about the same time, who in anger committed homicide, in striking a boy in the cloister in the time of Abbot William Culros. On this account, having lost his order, he proceeded to Rome with another monk, in the year 1500, where he was

<sup>1</sup> His death is noticed in Smyth's Diary as follows:—"Anno domini M v<sup>o</sup> xvii<sup>o</sup> Johannes dominus de Gordon predictus, in Kynloss obiit v<sup>o</sup> decembris et est Sepultus ubi solet cerei paschalis benedicio."

absolved, and sent a copy of the absolution to his abbot, but neither he nor his companion ever returned.

Abbot James Galbreth died in 1491. He first sent to Rome for bulls of his election; for before this time, the abbots were canonically elected by the votes of the monks and the election of the abbot of Melrose, "*Cum antea abbates eligerentur canonice per monachorum suffragia et patris abbatis a Melros electionem.*" Of one thing Ferrerius has no doubt, that he obtained the Abbacy simoniacally, having bought it from his predecessor. On one occasion, having gone to the church of Avoch in Ross-shire, and returning with few companions, he was seized by the Baron of Kilravock. But when Sir James Dunbar, Sheriff of Moray, had collected a company of armed men, with the view of obtaining the Abbot's release, his captor thought better of the matter, and released him. This abbot was rather of a hot and irascible temper.

His successor was William Culross, who died in 1504. He laboured under bodily disease, and after a few years appointed Thomas Crystall his successor, he himself being still alive. During his whole incumbency he did nothing great; and if he did not add to the wealth of the monastery, neither did he diminish it. He did many things with his own hands; he wrote much of books of ritual, and at times even laboured till he sweated in the gardens, in transplanting trees and work of that sort. He was a man sufficiently pious, if he had not given himself up to carnal pleasures and venery.

Thomas Crystall, was only a youth of eighteen when Abbot Galbreth selected him as a candidate for the Cistercian order in 1487. Next year he professed, and afterwards was admitted to the priesthood. He became abbot in 1499, and from that time, in asserting the rights of the monastery, in restoring ruinous buildings and erecting new ones, in reclaiming silver vessels and vestments from the families of those who had used them, in gathering into the order monks who had fallen away, and many other similar works, he was wholly occupied; and when he was getting into years, being about sixty, he selected Robert Reid as his successor.

The volume of Wicelius must have been acquired by Reid after 1555, when the last part of it was printed, and probably not till his last journey abroad in 1558, as the book-stamp is dated in that year.

It is probable that every foreign visit brought an accession to the

library. Thus Smyth notes, "Item, memorie commendandum quod Thomas Abbat de Kynloss fecit Robertum Abbatum ejus successorem de Galliis plures probos libros secum deferre anno domini m<sup>o</sup> v<sup>o</sup>xxix quorum nomina sunt in registro."

It may have been gifted by Reid to John Leslie; at all events, we find that he became the owner of it. It does not appear how long he retained it, but he presented it to Bishop William Gordon, probably before the time when his faithful adherence to the fortunes of his Royal Mistress drove him into prison and exile.

Bishop Gordon was fourth son of Alexander, third Earl of Huntly, and he was promoted to the See of Aberdeen in the year 1546. There is little reason for believing that this prelate was much addicted to literature.<sup>1</sup> It is at least well known that he was devoted to pursuits of a grosser sort, which are commented on very severely by Archbishop Spottiswood in his account of him. Perhaps Leslie hoped that his friend might find in the work of Wicelius an antidote to some of his evil ways. It is remarkable that Leslie, when parson of Mortlach, and as such a canon of the Cathedral Church of Aberdeen, had been a party in admonishing the Bishop at an earlier period.

In the year 1558, the Dean and Chapter of Aberdeen presented to their spiritual father a document entitled, "The Counsall gevin be the Deyne and Cheptour of Aberdeen to my Lord Bischope of Aberdene thair ordinar at his Lordschips desyr for reformatioun to be maid and staunching of heresies pullulant within the Diocie of Aberdene."

The original of this paper, which is signed by Leslie, and has the seal of the chapter, is still among the papers of the Erskines of Dun at Dun House, where I have examined it. It has been several times printed; but as a document of great historical significance it will bear to be quoted here:—

After giving advice on other points, the chapter "hertlie prayis and exhortis my Lord thair ordinar, for the honour of God, relief of his awin conscience, and weil of his Lordschip's diocie, eveting of greit sclander, and

<sup>1</sup> I may notice that in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, there is a copy of the works "Dionysii Carthusiani," in 4 vols., which belonged to Bishop Gordon. They have his book-stamp and coat of arms, with the legend "Gvillielmv Gordonē Episcopus Aberdonensis 1552."

because all thair that ar contrarious to the religion christian promitts faithfull obedience to the Prelatis, sua that thair will mend thair awin lyvis and thair inferiours, conforme to the law of God and Haly Kirk: In respect heirof that his Lordschip wald be sa gude as to schaw gude and edificative example: in speciale, in removeing and discharging himself of company of the gentill woman be quhom he is gretlie slanderit; without the quhilk be done, diverse that ar partinaris sayis they cannot accept counsall and correctioun of him quhilk will nocht correct himself; And in lyk manner nocht to be our familiar with thame that ar suspect contrarius to the kirk and of the new law; and that his Lordschip evaid the samyn; that quhen his Lordschip plesis to vesity the fieldis to repois himself, [he] cheis sic company as efferis till his Lordschip's awin estate, and caus his Lordschip's servands to reforme thamselvis; because, next himself, it seems him to begin at his awin houshold. Quhilkis premissis being done, the said Deyne and Cheptour beleuis in God that all sall cum weill to the honour of God and generall reformatioun of the hail Diosie of Aberdene; and thay promise to his Lordschip thair hartlie concurrence and assistance, with honour, service, and obedience, at thair utter power."

Of the volume of Wicelius nothing farther is known, till it was bought from a book-stall in Aberdeen within the last few years.