





Cardinal Innes

From a Printing in Possession of the Royal Antiquarian Society of Scotland.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF CARDINAL GEORGE INNES.*

By the Reverend Dr John Geddes.

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE SOCIETY.

TOWARDS the end of the twelfth century, a religious order called the Trinitarians is said to have been introduced into Scotland by King William. The object of its institution was the redemption of Christian captives from the hands of infidels; and either under this, or some analogous name, it subsisted on the continent late in the last century. The Trinitarians were favoured by William; and, during the three centuries subsequent, several Scotchmen among

* It has commonly been supposed that no native of Scotland was ever elevated to the college of Cardinals before the celebrated Beaton. It is also not generally known that Cardinal Innes was Vicar-General of England.

them made a considerable figure. One of the most eminent was Cardinal George Innes.

This prelate was born in Scotland, in the fourteenth century, of an illustrious family, though the particular *designation* of it is now unknown. He displayed an early inclination to piety and learning: and, after the usual time devoted to probation, took the religious habit and solemn vows, in the royal convent of Trinitarians in Aberdeen. He then went to prosecute his studies at the university of Oxford, where he obtained the degree of doctor of divinity. Not long after returning home, he was appointed *superior* of the convent: and, in consequence of the approbation bestowed on his conduct, he was, by the next general chapter, chosen provincial minister of the Scottish province to which he belonged. It is to be observed, that the religious houses of this order were called hospitals, or ministries, and that the words minister and superior are synonymous.

Innes was in the next place promoted to the rank of Vicar-General of the Trinitarians in their three provinces, as they were denominated, of Scotland, England, and Ireland. In discharging this office, his uncommon prudence gained him the esteem of all with whom he had to deal; and he was thence highly regarded by the most distinguished persons in the three kingdoms.

His reputation having reached Pope Urban VI., whose pontificate was disturbed by troubles arising from the great schism towards the end of the fourteenth century, he was employed by the Pope in managing some important affairs in Britain. Nor was this the only mark of the high consideration in which he was held, for the Pope created him cardinal of Saint Laurence in Lucina. He then exhibited a singular instance of humility, in declining the proffered dignity; those entrusted with communicating the Pope's design

found him in his cell in a state of the deepest affliction, of which we are not told the cause; and he persisted in refusing the purple.

Nevertheless, Pope John XXIII., who had himself been legate in Scotland, and from personal acquaintance knew the worth of Father Innes, prosecuted the design of his predecessor. He renewed the creation of cardinal; and at the same time laid his injunctions on him to accept of the dignity. This done, he called him to the Council of Constance, where he assisted until its termination in the year 1418.

Martin V. being then elected Pope, charged the cardinal with letters to the king of Scotland, expressing his desire that he should be appointed to the first episcopal see that became vacant in the kingdom. But the cardinal did not live to deliver them, having died in the course of his return, to the great regret of his own countrymen and others, by whom he was known and esteemed.

Cardinal Innes is celebrated for his attention in discharging the duties of his station as a monk, a priest, and a superior. He is particularly commended for his application to the consideration of the truths of religion, even amidst the most important and embarrassing affairs: and there cannot be a more conspicuous trait in his character than declining an honour which was the utmost object of ecclesiastical ambition. In this he presented an instance of moderation almost unparalleled. Let it be contrasted with the conduct of others, even of those who gained the chair of St Peter itself. Pope Sixtus V., in the succeeding century, lived like an anchorite; all his actions seemed guided by humility; unceasing piety was practised night and day; and the public weal invariably appeared to predominate over views of private benefit. By these qualities he insinuated himself into the favour of the conclave of

cardinals, who elected what they esteemed a virtuous Pope—but who proved a stern and ambitious tyrant.

Cardinal Innes is said to have diligently committed his sentiments to writing; and we accordingly find him named as the author of four different works in Latin. These are: a description of the city of Jerusalem, as it was then in the hands of the infidels; *Descriptio Jerusalem Deformata*. 2. A history of his own order, the Trinitarians or Red Friars; *De Fundatione suæ Ordinis*. 3. The Grievs of the Virgin Mary; *De Doloribus Beatæ Mariæ Virginis*. 4. A lamentation for the miserable state of the Holy Land; *Planctus super Terra Sancta*. The second of these is reported to have been the most celebrated; and, could it be recovered, would probably throw some light on the history of this country.

Few traces of the biography of Cardinal Innes, that we are acquainted with, exist in Scotland; but foreign historians have not altogether neglected it. Of this number are Figueras, Melchior, John of St Athanasius, bishop of Leysi, and Dominico Lopez. Dempster, however, alludes to him in his Ecclesiastical History.

We have prefixed an engraving from a portrait of Cardinal Innes, which, considering its antiquity, is in remarkable preservation. It has been conjectured that it might have belonged to the Red Friars of Aberdeen, and that it escaped the general destruction which overwhelmed the religious houses of Scotland at the date of the reformation. It is said to have been formerly in possession of the family of Innes of Tullifour; and was presented to Captain Lewis Innes of Balnacraig in Aberdeenshire, who considered it a suitable donation for the Antiquarian Society of Scotland.

This painting represents the Cardinal in the habit of his order, which is white, with a cross patée of red and blue on the breast.

Over the habit there is a cardinal's scarlet cloak. A small scarlet cap is on his head, and beside him is that which is emblematic of his dignity. On the back of four volumes introduced are written in characters too small to appear in our engraving,

De ordine fund :
Doloris Mariæ :
Descriptio Hier :
Terre sanctæ.

There is also an inscription in Spanish under the painting, which, extended, is,—*Ecelentissimo Senor Don F. George Innes, natural de Escocia, ministro provincial y vicario General de Ingalaterra florecio ano 1412, escrivio hesos libros*. This signifies, in English,—“The most excellent gentleman, Don F. George Innes, a native of Scotland, provincial minister and Vicar-General of England, flourished 1412, and wrote these books.”