

#### IV.

NOTICE OF A NOTARIAL INSTRUMENT NARRATING THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE ELECTION OF JANET HOPPRINGIL AS Prioress OF COLDSTREAM, ON 23<sup>d</sup> FEBRUARY 1537-8. COMMUNICATED BY ANDREW GILLMAN, Esq., S.S.C., F.S.A. Scot.

There is preserved in the Advocates' Library the Protocol of Edward Dickson, notary public, who appears to have filled the office of clerk to the official of St Andrews, within the Archdeaconry of Lothian, during the early part of the sixteenth century. The deeds contained in this Protocol relate almost entirely to the transactions of churchmen, and show but too clearly the simoniacal practices which prevailed in the Scottish Church during that period of her lowest degradation. It contains the subjoined notarial instrument narrating the proceedings on the election of Janet Hoppringill (the name now known as Pringle) as prioress of the Cistercian monastery of Coldstream, in the diocese of St Andrews, in the stead of the prioress Isabella, who had died shortly before. The surname of the deceased prioress appears also to have been Hoppringill, from a charter by King James V. granted in 1537 to the monastery and her, referred to in the notice of the monastery in the Appendix to Keith's Bishops.

So little is known of the Scottish nunneries that this instrument appears worthy of preservation in our Transactions. It narrates, in the verbose style of the period, the canon ordaining that monasteries should

not be destitute of a prioress beyond a month after a vacancy; that the prioress Isabella had died (*sicut Deo placuit viam vniversis carnis ingressa nature soluens debitum*) on 26th January 1537 (1538, according to the present computation), that her body had received Christian burial, and that on the 13th February following, after due notice, the nuns of the abbey, eleven in number, named Isabella Rutherford, the sub-prioress, Katherine Flemyng, Jonet Broun, Marion Ruthirfurd, Jonet Kingorne, Elizabeth Hoppingill, Katherine Stevinstoun, Cristina Todrik, Katherine Franche, Jonet Schaw, and Elen Riddell, after assisting at a mass of the Holy Ghost in the chapel of their monastery, being assembled by the tolling of a bell in their chapter-house, and having on bended knee implored with contrite voices the grace of the Holy Spirit, by singing *Veni Creator Spiritus*, did, without contradiction, and as they firmly believed by divine inspiration, elect as their prioress Dame Janet Hoppingill, a veiled and professed nun of their monastery, of lawful age, born in wedlock of honest parents, and a person renowned by virtue, and fit and qualified to govern and rule their monastery, both in spiritual and temporal matters. They thereupon asked the elect to accept office, which she agreed to do, and took the burden thereof on her shoulders, to the honour and praise of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, under whose invocation the monastery was founded. They then, chanting *Te Deum*, proceeded in procession to their church, and there before the high altar returned thanks to God, and announced the election to the clergy and people. James, Archbishop of St Andrews, their diocesan, to whom the writ is addressed, is then asked to confirm the election.

The election of Elizabeth Hoppingill must have been confirmed in due course, as she received, in her character of prioress, a gift of the ward of Ellem of Butterden on 8th June 1531, and a similar gift of the escheat of Alexander Heriot of Dernchester on 8th May 1537.

I may add that the Priory of Coldstream, through its position on the Borders, was subject, like other religious houses who had possessions in that district, to the depredations of the English,<sup>1</sup> and that on 3d May

<sup>1</sup> Among many proofs of this statement there may be adduced a charter by Marion Hamylton, Prioress of Elkillis [Elcho], and her convent, to Thomas Hopper and Margaret Diksoun, his wife, of two husband lands, "in villa territorio et dominio de Stychell," which recites that "per incursiones inuasiones depredaciones et com-

1509, a letter passed the Privy Seal, "to the priores and conuent of Caldstreme gevand the Kingis favoures tollerance and speciale licence to thaim their tenants seruandis and intromitteres to intercommon with Inglesmen in bying or selling of vittalis scheip nolt tymmer and other laful gudis for the reparatioun and uphalding of the place and als to be ansuerit and haue protectioun of Inglismen for wele and savite of their place landes and gudis on the bordouris alsweil in tyme of were gife ony happinnis as in tyme of pece and als to assouer Inglismen to the nuomer of xij personis or within to cum als oft as neid beyis to thair said place of Caldstreme to the effect abouewritten."

*Electio Priorisse de Cauldstrem.*

In Dei Nomine Amen Rmo. in Christo patri et domino domino Jacobo miseratione diuina Sanctiandree archiepiscopo totius regni Scotie primati legato nato etc. vestre humiles et deuote filie moniales et conuentus monasterii de Caldstrem ordinis Cisterciensis dicte vestre Sanctiandree diocesis reuerentias debitas et honores Quia propter vacationem priorissarum desolationem diuturnam monasteria regularia incommoda magna et grauia in spiritualibus et temporalibus pati consueuerunt conditores sacrorum canonum prouida deliberatione statuendo decreuerunt quod vltra mensem priorisse non vacet ecclesia regularis Ea propter recolende memorie Isabella quondam priorissa supradicti monasterii vigesimo sexto die mensis Ianuarii anno Dni. I M quingentesimo trigesimo septimo sicut Domino placuit viam vniuerse carnis ingressa nature soluens debitum quod dolenter referimus ipsiusque corpore reuerenter quod decuit ecclesiastice tradito sepulture ne ipsum monasterium vacationis et desolationis sue incommoda diutius deploraret et dispendiose sustineret statim nos moniales et conuentus predictae ad tractum campane more

bustiones per veteres Anglie inimicos tempore guerrarum infra terras nostras subsecuentes jacentes super limites Scotie temporibus retroactis commissas eodem terre vaste et innocuate remanebant sic quod firme nostre earundem minime solute fuerunt quocirca graue damnum sustinebamus." This charter is subscribed by the prioress, but the names of the twelve nuns are written by the writer of the deed. They are Elezabet Diksoun, Essobell Haiste, Gelis Palmar, Agnes Hoge, Essobell Trumbill, Marion Dowglass, Elezabet Schoriswod, Clares Napar, Catharin Diksoun, Catharin Gradein, Janat Singlar, Cathrin Bowstoun.

solito in capitulo dicti monasterii in vnum conuenientes diem decimum tertium mensis instantis Februarii anno predicto ad electionem future priorisse nostre canonice celebrandam et ad omnia alia et singula peragenda que huiusmodi electionis negotium concernere dinoscuntur tamque terminum canonicum legitimum et peremptorium pro huiusmodi electione facienda duximus statuendum necnon omnes et singulas moniales dicti monasterii vniuersesque alios et singulos sua communiter vel diuisim interesse habentes seu habere pretendentes et quos infrascriptum tangebatur negotium seu tangere poterit quomodolibet in futurum qui debuerant voluerant et commode poterant dicte electioni interesse ad prefatos terminum et diem literatorie citandos fore decreuimus et citari cum intimatione quod siue in ipso termino seu die interessent siue non presentes nihilominus moniales et conuentus predictae ad electionem faciendam procederent ipsorum sic citatorum absentis seu contumacis non obstantibus ipsisque veteris nullatenus expectatis ceteris Igitur interim omnibus et singulis dicti monasterii monialibus et aliis interesse habentibus qui electioni huiusmodi celebrande debuerant interesse dictis die et termino post missam de Sancto Spiritu in dicto nostro monasterio deuote et solempniter celebratam Nos moniales et conuentus suprascripte videlicet dompne Isobella Rutherford subpriorissa Katherina Flemyng Joneta Broun Mariota Ruthirfurd Joneta Kingorne Elizabeth Hoppringill Katrina Stevinstoun Cristina Tedrik Katrina Franche Joneta Schaw et Elena Riddall capitulum et conuentum pro tempore representantes ad hoc in domo capitulari prefati monasterii ad sonum campane prout moris est omnes insimul congregatae et de electionis negotio mature tractantes ymno Veni Creator Spiritus, spiritus sancti gratia imploranda a nobis genibus flexis flebilibusque vocibus precantato et omnibus aliis in talibus fieri consuetis ritu obseruatis et completis omnes et singule nulla penitus discrepante contradicente sed vnaquaque diuina inspiratione repleta et spiritus sancti gratia vt firmiter credimus illustrata repente nulla nominatione nulloque tractato alio precedente solum Deum preoculis habentes in Dompnam Jonetam Hoppringill ipsius monasterii velatam et professam monialem virtutum meritis insignitam tamquam personam magis ydoneam dignam et qualificatam in spiritualibus et temporalibus circumspectam et ad regimen et gubernationem eiusdem nostri monasterii et reddituum eiusdem magis habilem et expertam et industriosam date legitima consti-

tutam de legitimo matrimonio et honestis parentibus procreatam regulam et religionem dicti monasterii preceteris expertam vna voce et vno spiritu simul et vnanimiter vota nostra direximus et ipsam Domnam Jonetam omnes et singule concorditer in nostram et dicti monasterii priorissam et animarum nostrarum patricem elegimus Ac demum huiusmodi nostram electionem de eadem ut premittitur factam eidem reuerenter prout decuit presentamus ipsam suppliciter et instanter rogantes quatenus votes nostris et precibus pie annuens huiusmodi nostre electioni consensum suum preberet benigne Tandem ipsa electa (matura deliberatione cum quibusdam consorioribus et amicis suis prehabita licet ex humilitate et quadam pusillanimitate se insufficientem indignam et inhabilem ad tam grande onus subeundum asserens multipliciter excusaret) tamen iugo diuine vocationis cernicem cordis deuote humilans inuocato premitus diuine pietatis auxilio humiliter votis nostris huiusmodi duxit assenciendam vbi deuote electionem ipsam officium onusque humeris suis impositum ut predesse valeat mansuete suscipiens et pie acceptans ad honorem et laudem Dei omnipotentis et Beatissime Virginis Marie sub quorum vocabulis dictum monasterium extitit fundatum et constructum Tunc nobis exultatione magna gaudentibus et vocibus altibus ympnum Dei gloriosum Te Deum Laudamus cantantibus campanis solempniter pulsatis ipsam assumentes in ecclesiam dicti monasterii processionaliter ad gratiarum actiones Deo reddendum coram magno altare vt moris est introduximus vbi functo ympno factaque oratione consueta confectum electio nostra clero et populo fuit publicata et modo debito manifestata Quare reuerendissamam vestram paternitatem tam deuote quam humiliter supplicando exoramus quatenus electionem nostram tam canonicè celebratam gratiose admittere dignemur admissaque auctoritate vestra ordinaria benigne confirmare vt Deo autore nobis et nostro monasterio sepedicto velut pastrix ydonea preesse valeat vtiliter et prodesse nosque sub ipsius salubri regimine et prouida gubernatione possumus creatori nostro deuote deseruire et salubriter militare Ceterum ut vestra reuerendissima paternitas euidentius recognoscat nostrorum omnium et singulorum vota in premissis et singulis premissis et in hanc electionem et petitionem nos fuisse et esse vnanimis et concordis hoc presens electionis nostre decretum paternitati vestre humiliter transmisimus propriisque nostris nominibus subscriptum et in euidentium premissorum

robur in forma publica per notarium publicum subscriptum redegi et subscribi fecimus sigillique nostri communis jussimus et fecimus appensione communiri et roborari apud dictum nostrum monasterium die decimotertio mensis Februarii anno Domini m<sup>v</sup><sup>c</sup> trigesimo septimo indictione vndecima pontificatus domini Pauli pape tertii anno quarto Presentibus ibidem Magistris Roberto Hoppringill rectore de Arnotstoun Patricio Cokburne rectore de Pettekis Dominis Johanne Donaldsoun Cuthberto Hynde Andrea Curry capellanis Willelmo Cokburne de Schoslie Roberto Watsoun de Yselye Archibaldo Hoppringill Adam Cokburne Jacobo Hoppringill Dompno Arthuro Craufurd subpriore monasterii de Newbottill et Dompno Jacobo Watsoun monacho eiusdem monasterii testibus requisitis hora decima ante meridiem aut circiter.