

NOTICE OF THE PRIORY CHURCH OF BEAULY, INVERNESS-SHIRE.
By CAPTAIN T. P. WHITE, R.E., F.S.A., Scot.

Among the remains of religious establishments planted in Scotland during Mediæval times, not the least interesting is the Priory Church of Beaulieu or Beaully,¹ situated within the parish of Kilmorack in Inverness-shire.² Nearly six centuries and a half have elapsed since its foundation by Sir John de Bisset of Loveth,³ the then representative of an illustrious Scottish family resident in the neighbourhood. The actual date⁴ of the founder's gift appears to have been the 9th July 1223, the charter of endowment being confirmed by King Alexander II. in 1231, and by Pope Gregory apparently in the same year, namely, the fourth of

¹ Also spelt Bewly, Beuli, Beauli. The Latin title of the priory was "Prioratus de bello loco."

² Sometimes stated to be Ross-shire:—an erroneous impression, arising, I suppose from the proximity of Beaully to the border of that county. The village is ten miles almost due west from the town of Inverness.

³ Written Byset, Bizet, Bisert, &c.

⁴ MS. History of Frasers, 1749. Advocates' Library.

his pontificate.¹ The establishment was for a fraternity known as the monks of Vallis Caulium or Val des-Choux, a community which sprang up within the diocese of Langres in the Duchy of Burgundy, about A.D. 1193–7 under one Virard. They were a reform or offshoot of the Cistercians; and, like that larger community, followed the rule of the primitive St Benedict, who may be called one of the fathers of western monastic institutions. “By their constitution,” says Keith, “these monks were obliged to live an austere and solitary life, none but the prior and procurator being allowed to go out of the cloisters for any reason whatsoever.” They were first introduced into Scotland between A.D. 1220–30 by William Malvoisin, Bishop of St Andrews, and had only three monasteries in North Britain—Pluscardine in Moray, Beauly, and Ardchattan in the county of Argyle, each under the direction of a prior.² Sometimes the monks of Val-des-Choux³ are styled Benedictines from the saint whose rule was followed by this Order as well as by so many others.

Father Hay, again, author of the MS. volume commonly known as “*Scotia Sacra*,”⁴ mentions another Order as having, in conjunction with that of Vallis-Caulium, been brought over by Bishop Malvoisin, and settled at Beauly. This Order, founded by St Gualbert, he styles “*Vallis Umbrosæ*,” so called from the Abbey of Val-Ombre near Florence in Tuscany. Either he has confused these two Orders,⁵ or the confraternity at Beauly may have been partly made up from both. From his account of them,—and considering his ecclesiastical position, he was an unlikely person to exaggerate,—there was great need for reform somewhere. Speaking of the Order,—but whether he means the Vallis-Caulium monks, those of Val-Ombre, or the Cistercians the former had branched from, is

¹ A.D. 1230 is the year generally quoted.

² Keith's Catalogue of Bishops.

³ Wardlaw MSS. of Frasers, &c., in Advocates' Library, date 1750.

⁴ In Advocates' Library. It is dated 1700, and written in a beautiful clerly hand in French, Latin, and English indiscriminately mixed up. He subscribes himself as Mr Richard Augustine Hay, Canon-Regular of St Genovers in Paris; Prior of St Pierremont, &c.

⁵ Keith tells us this confusion often occurred. He calls the Val-Ombre monks Camaldulians; and says they were a community of hermits, founded a century and half earlier than the Order of Val-des-Choux.

not very clear,—he adverts in brief but severe terms to their infractions of discipline, the diversion to private uses of goods which should have been shared in common, the overgrowth of wealth, and other corruptions which had crept in among them.¹

In attempting to give a brief historical sketch of this ecclesiastical foundation before I notice what relics have remained to the present day on the ground itself, it may be convenient to consider the subject separately, as far as practicable, first, with reference specially to the monks themselves as a religious community, and, secondly, in connection with the two or three leading families of the locality, including that of the founder, most prominently associated with this community. It is a misfortune that the original chartulary of Beaulieu Priory has been lost sight of.² Here we should have expected to meet with much bearing upon the transactions of the monks and contemporaneous local history, for which we have, as it is, to depend mainly upon extracts not always at first hand, and often fragmentary.

In addition to Macfarlane's transcripts from the Priory Register, as bearing upon the history of Beaulieu, there are certain manuscript family records of last century, the Chartulary of Moray, and a few other isolated notices.

To begin with the monks, then. It was about 1222, according to one MS.³ on the Isle of Ach-na-baidh, that the first prior, Pater Jacomo Baptista,⁴ with six French monks, landed within the demesne of Lovat. On this same spot stood, or had previously done so, a chapel of St Michael, and

¹ "Cum divitiis ordo crevisset paulatim infracta disciplina, et mores corumpi corpore dum bonis in commune absumendis ad privatos usus abutuntur, et aliis libidinum irritamentis."

² Mr Brichan, in the "Orig. Parochiales," and Dr Stuart, both remark upon this. The latter tells us there are eleven religious houses, Beaulieu among them, whose registers cannot now be traced, though several of them were quoted by writers of the last century. He thinks it probable some of them may be yet found in the libraries or charter-rooms of our great proprietors.—*Royal Commission on Historical MSS., first Report, 1870.*

³ Called "Diplomata Prioratus de Bello loco." Ach-na-baidh, plain of the estuary the old name of the spot.

⁴ It is just possible the writer has mistaken the name of John the Baptist, "Johanni Baptiste" occurring once or twice in the earliest of the Beaulieu Chartulary transcripts, as a patron Saint, for that of the Prior.

the king, Alexander II., in his confirmation to the monks of the lands of Strath Alvi, directs that the Priory is to be erected there. The brotherhood was to be maintained, we are told, at the public expense, till the founder of the priory was in a position to settle them in their new sphere. The precise date of the erection of the Priory buildings cannot be fixed. One account gives it as A.D. 1245, in the time of Pope Innocent IV.; but supposing it to have been actually begun so early, many years may have elapsed before its final completion. Upon purely architectural grounds, indeed, there are reasons for doubting if the present structure can be earlier in date than the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The monks, on landing, being struck with the fairness of the prospect, pronounced the isle of Ach-na-baidh to be a lovely spot, and it was thenceforward called Beau Lieu (*bellus locus a loci amœnitate*). The fruits of the field, it is recorded, were plentiful in the plain where the monastery was situated;¹ and by the liberality of the Lord of Bysset the community soon found itself possessed of a goodly portion in lands. The exact precincts and extent of these lands has been noted in some of the MSS., and, like most monastic possessions, they must have been increased considerably by endowments from successive proprietors. The first grant named is the lands of Strath Alvay, in which the isle of Ach-na-badi, now Beau Lieu, was included, and which extended from Inachterradale on the east to the burn of Breasach westward.² The next grants we hear of are as to certain multures bestowed by the Laird of Bisset within the parishes of Wardlaw and Kiltarlity, namely, those on the lands of Loveth, Luss, Finask, Muniack, &c., all of which are confirmed to the said monks by King Alexander in 1231. Again, between the years 1227 and 1241, when Pope Gregory confirms the Beauly friars in their property, the lands of Fithenay and Karcurri, with the fishing of the Forne, are mentioned as further gifts from the liberal founder of the monastery.³ “We have taken,” says His Holiness in this Bull, “your persons and the monastery specially under the protection of the blessed

In fertili planitie quæ nullis ferma extraneis fructibus, &c.—*Hay*.

² MS. Hist. of the Frasers.—Advocates' Library.

³ Macfarlane's Transcripts, Chart. of Beauly.

S. Peter and ourselves; as also the possessions of Lithenay and Karcurri, with the Forne fishery which John Bisset granted to you; . . . likewise your landed property and your other goods; . . . and we confirm you in the same by our apostolic authority. . . . Given at the Lateran." . . . (Date omitted.) About the same time, William, brother to John de Bisset, grants to the monks, in the name of "God, the blessed Mary, and the blessed John Baptist," the church of Abertarf,¹ in the diocese of Moray; and this gift, as well as their tithes and fishings on the Spey, is ratified to the Beaulieu monks by Andrew, Bishop of Moray, shortly after. The charter of ratification is subscribed by the Bishop and fourteen canons.² This William frequently witnesses to his elder brothers charters and donations. The terms of the founder's charter were, that the brethren should pray for him during his lifetime; after his death take charge of his body and obsequies, and keep alive the memory of his departed soul by continual sacrifices and works of piety.³ Scarcely, however, was Bisset's endowment secured to the Beaulieu monks when an event occurred which entirely changed the fortunes of his family. And now let us note what is known of the history of this ancient house.

The name of Bizet, Biseth, or Byset, stands out in early Scottish history under circumstances of unusual prominence. The family, according to Anderson, was originally from England, and first settled in Scotland, it is said, under William the Lion, though Abercromby supports the position of their introduction in the reign of Malcolm III. As this Malcolm (Ceann Mor) reigned A.D. 1057-93, and we find a Byset about a century later occupying a position of great eminence at the court of William, and actually marrying the king's daughter,⁴ there is no difficulty in accepting the latter view as the more probable. At all events, this John de Byset, son-in-law to the Scottish king, makes his appearance as Lord of the lands of Lovat A.D. 1170, the previous possessors having apparently been Fentons

¹ The grant includes some rights of fishing, specified as salmon, "et garbarum." ["Garba" means a sheaf of corn, teind sheaves.—ED.]

² Keith says fifteen.

³ "Ut pro ipso dum viveret, &c., &c., prosequerentur.

⁴ The Wardlaw MS. says her name was Agnes.

and Gilchrists or Grahams. Of these last names it may be remarked that they continued in the district in the persons of individuals holding Crown wardships of the two forts, Beaufort or Downie, and Lovat, during the Bysets' tenure of the lands these forts were built upon. And in the interval between the fall of the Bissets and the rise of the Frasers of Lovat, these Fentons and Grahams appear to have got back some of their property in the neighbourhood.¹ John de Bisset, first of Lovat, says one manuscript, was "a great courtier with William the Lion, and was settled in Lovat with commission from the king, a man of great courage and activity."² To him succeeded his second son, John, who married, A.D. 1206, Jean Haliburton, daughter of the Lord of Culboynie. At this time the family had become sufficiently important as to have granted lands under conditions of vassalage to several smaller lairds, who were styled the Bysets' barons, Fenton and Haliburton being among the number. The M'Kays and M'Raes, who were settled in Urquhart, Abriachar, and the neighbouring parts, were also vassals of the house of Bisset.³ The former clan or sept, we are told, were the only supporters the Lord of Bisset could muster in an expedition (date not named) into Glenelg to collect his rents;⁴ so that at some time that district, or part of it, must have been among the possessions of the family. In William the Lion's reign several families of Bisset were, according to Chalmers, settled in Moray and the Merse districts.⁵ One of them makes over to the Abbey of Kelso the manor of Upsetlington. From the Chronicle of Melrose⁶ we hear of one Sir Walter de Bizet, who married Ada, daughter of Rowland M'Donal, Lord of Galloway, about the year 1200. His grandson, William de Bisset, was one of the auditors in the competition between Bruce and Balliol, A.D. 1291; and William's grandson, again, Thomas de Bisset, was second husband (the first being William de Ramsay) of Isabella M'Duff, heiress of the earldom of Fife. To Thomas, King David II., in the year 1362, granted a charter of that earldom to revert to the Crown failing male heirs. He took the title of Earl of Fife, and died without issue, about 1366. His widow married Walter Stuart, Earl of Menteith, who also died without issue; and in 1371 she disposed of the Fyfe

¹ Chart. of Moray, &c.² Wardlaw MS.³ Anderson's Hist.⁴ Wardlaw MS.⁵ Anderson's Hist.⁶ According to the Kiltravock MS.

earldom to Robert Stuart, afterwards Duke of Albany. Upon the forfeiture of this peer's son, Duke Murdoc, the earldom was annexed to the crown.¹ According to the Kilravock MS., the first Bisset of Lovat was settled there, with many other strangers, by King Malcolm IV. (the maiden) in his northern expedition against Moray; and his son, the founder of Beauly, was made governor of the Fort of Lovat.² It is thus pretty evident that the Bissets were a rich and powerful family, connected with some of the first blood in Scotland. John de Bisset had no sons that came to age. Of his three daughters, Mary,³ the eldest, married David de Graham; Cecilia, the next, William Fenton of Beaufort; and Elizabeth, the youngest, Sir Andrew de Bosco, Dominus de Redcastle and Eddyrdor, whose daughter was the ancestress of the family of De Roos or Rose of Kilravock. By this marriage with Bisset's eldest daughter, who was heiress of Lovat, a Graham once more became possessor of that lordship. In 1258, as "Dominus de Loveth," he makes an arrangement with the Bishop of Moray about some fishings on the Forne, part, if not all, of which his father-in-law had, as we have seen, granted to the Beauly monks.⁴ In 1280, William Fenton Lord of Beaufort, and Cecilia Bisset his wife, are excommunicated by the same bishop for unjustly retaining the lands of Kiltalargyn.⁵ In 1222, the mention of "nobilis vir Joannes Bisseth, Dominus de Loveth," occurs in the chartulary of Moray. Two years later John de Byset enters into a compact with Bryce or Brisius, Bishop of Moray, with respect to the transference of the Church of St Maurity in Doun-bealach to Balbray or Mons St Marie, where it was erected into a mensal, and parochial church.⁶ This deed is subscribed by the bishop and the chanter.⁷ In it the said John Byset, "for the soul of his father, and likewise for the safety and the souls of himself, his mother, and all his posterity, conferred upon and granted to the

¹ Sibbald's Hist. and Kilravock MS.

² Kilravock and Wardlaw MSS.

³ It was a favourite theory with the genealogists of the Fraser family that one of their house, the Sir Simon who took so determined a part against Edward I. in his invasion of Scotland, and was afterwards beheaded in London, married a Mary de Bisset, and thereby acquired the Lovat property; but this assumption has been shown to be incorrect; the dates, in fact, are all against it.

⁴ Chart. of Moray.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Anderson's Hist.

⁷ Wardlaw MS.

church of Dul-batelach,¹ for the purposes of a free and perpetual alms seven acres of land in a suitable place and near the parish church, after its translation to Fyngart, in the place called Wardlaw."² Again, in 1226, he devotes the right of patronage or advowson of Kiltarigry (Kiltarlity) church "to God and the Church of St Peter of Rothven for the maintenance of lepers devoting themselves to God in that place."³ In this grant the favours conferred upon the Bissets by King William are recognised. It was given, says the chartulary, "for the soul of the Lord William King of Scotland, and also for the preservation of my noble Lord and King Alexander, and for the soul's health of my ancestors and successors."⁴ In 1228 the Lord of Lovat is again heard of, this time in dispute, as to certain church lands, with Bishop Bryce's successor, Andrew de Moravia, who laid the foundation stone of the magnificent cathedral church of the Holy Trinity at Elgin.⁵

So far we have traced nearly all that is known respecting the Priory and the family of its founder up to the period when the connection between the two was suddenly severed. The circumstance which led to that severance I shall quote in the words of the Fraser MS. :— "About the year 1244,⁶ while King Alexander II. and a great number of his nobility lay at Haddington, the lodging of Patrick Cumming, Earl of Athole, took fire on a sudden, in which the earl and two servants were burnt to death. Though it was not known how the fire began, yet a general suspicion ran against the Bissets, upon account of a standing feud betwixt the earl and them. They were accordingly summoned to appear to answer for that murder, and such was the great power and interest of the Cummings, that though William Bisset proved by many witnesses, among whom was the queen, that he was at Forfar—upwards of sixty miles from Haddington—the night that that villany was perpetrated, yet

¹ In this transformation of the name (see Doun-bealach above) we have an example of the hazards to be encountered in attempting to interpret topographical etymologies. An easy transition from this rendering would give us Dal-bataile, which would read instead of "hill of the pass," the "field of battle."

² Scotice, Balbrach; Anderson's Hist.

³ I quote the Chart. of Moray as literally as possible.

⁴ Anderson's Hist.

⁵ Keith and Fraser MS.

⁶ Anderson makes it 1242.

the Cummings insisted that several of his servants and vassals were seen there; upon which the whole family was banished, and their estates confiscated to the king." Bisset, finding himself attainted and stripped of his property, shortly afterwards leagues himself with Donald, Lord of the Isles, and accepts a charter from that potentate for the lands of Auchterless in Aberdeenshire, on condition of paying him the customary homage. This so incensed the King of Scotland when it came to his knowledge, that Bisset was at once proclaimed an outlaw; and, on being captured in the wood of Auchterless, where he had doubtless gone to take possession of his illegally gotten acquisition, he was banished to Ireland, where his four brothers accompanied him, in the year 1249. Yet his forfeiture must have been partially remitted, as in 1258 he was in possession of the lands of Erchless."¹ After his banishment, according to one account, the barony of Lovat was bestowed upon Sir Simon Fraser of Tweeddale,² and passed on to his son, thus inaugurating the new house of that name in the north; but there appears to be no satisfactory evidence of this, as the first Fraser styled of Lovat does not appear till A.D. 1367.³ A family genealogist would naturally make the most of his patron's pedigree, and the statements of such an one must be accepted with reserve.

Between the years 1242 and 1278, charters for grants of land and quit claims from various individuals to the Beaulieu monks are recorded in the ancient registers.⁴ The names of Bisset's daughters and sons-in-law occur pretty frequently about this period. In 1279 the Prior of the monastery is appointed sub-deputy by the Abbot of Deir to settle a dispute as to the church lands of Kiltarlity, between Archibald, Bishop of Moray, and William de Fenthon, lord of Beaufort, who, as we have seen, was husband to one of Byset's daughters and co-heiresses.⁵ About 1293 this lady, Cecilia Byset, then a widow, grants a charter to the monks of the third part of the lands of Altyre,⁶ which she had inherited. In 1295, Elizabeth, daughter to the nobleman, the Lord John of Bisset, and formerly

¹ Afterwards owned by the Chisholms.

² Fraser MS.

³ Anderson's Hist. and Chart. of Moray.

⁴ Origines Parochiales.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Diplomata" of the Priory. It is given "to the brethren of Vallis-caulium serving God in house Belli Loci."

spouse to the Lord Andrew of Bosco, subscribes a deed making over to her child, Mary de Bosco, the estates of Kilravock.¹ In the year 1278, Andrew de Boscho, lord of Eddyrdor, and Elizabeth his spouse, grant an annual alms of two merks to the monastery of Beauly (domui Belli Loci), the same to be paid "at our castle of Eddyrdor by us and our heirs." The witnesses to this charter are William, Vicar of Eddyrdor, and Colin Gove, Constable of Farnedale, and it is dated "die Veneris" (or Friday), next after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, A.D. 1278.² Somewhere about the same period a deed of gift appears in the Beauly Chartulary from "David de Innerlunan" (whom I take to be John Bisset's son-in-law, Sir David de Graham) before his marriage, granting, with consent of Gillecrist³ MacGilliduff, to the brethren of Beauly all his estate of Auchterradale, namely, one half of the davoch land which he held of the said Gilchrist. The witnesses are—The Lord Walter of Moray; the Lord Andrew of Moray; William, Earl of Sutherland; Alan, brother to the said Lord Andrew; Isaac Mac Gillendre; John Christinson (fili Cristini); Duncan Duff; Bechly Beg, and others.⁴ In the same register is a charter by William de Fenton, Lord of Beauford, dated on St Valentine's Fairday, 1328, granting to the monks two merks value of the Beauford multures. And, during the first quarter of the 14th century, we hear of Patrick de Graham, who gives one-third part of the Altyre lands in exchange or quit claim for certain multures for one-third of one hundred and twenty merks which his grandfather, Sir John Bisset, had pledged himself to pay the monks in perpetuity towards the fabric of the priory church, and for other debts.⁵ The witnesses to this charter are John de Grant, Thomas, Bishop of Ross, the Lord William de Fenton, and John de Fenton his son. In the south and elsewhere the name of Bisset reappears from time to time in the different Chartularies;⁶

¹ Fraser MSS.

² Chart. Beauly.

³ The Grahams were also styled Gilchrists, according to Anderson.

⁴ Chart. Beauly.

⁵ Origines Parochiales.

⁶ In 1305 a Bisset is constable of Stirling Castle, and there are proofs of a branch of the family having held the estates of Dalry and Merchiston near Edinburgh in the reigns of Robert I. and David II.—*Anderson's Hist., Chalmers's Caledonia, &c.* And in 1431 Donald Balloch of the Isles inherited through his mother, Marjory Bisset, the territory of the Glens in Antrim.—*Gregory.*

but, so far as the subject of the present paper is concerned, this once distinguished family, which, in the person of the founder of the Beaulieu Priory, would seem to have possessed the estates of Lovat, the Aird, Stratherick,¹ part of Glenelg in the west, Altyre, Urquhart, and Kilravock, in all a princely heritage, may be said to pass out of notice in the beginning of the 14th century.

We have next to glance at the other Scottish houses grouping themselves around the Monastery. First in importance comes the illustrious race of the Frasers, who, after a short interregnum, replaced the Bissets in the heritorship of Lovat. The genealogy of the family has been amply discussed elsewhere, and need not be entered into here. I may just remark, however, that the name of Fraser or Friselle was undoubtedly among the first introduced into this country at the Norman Conquest, though the date of the family's entry into Scotland is involved in obscurity. Their earliest settlements, says Anderson, north of the Border were in East Lothian, whence they successively branched off into Tweeddale in the 12th and 13th centuries, and afterwards to Invernessshire and Aberdeenshire. It was not, however, as we have seen, till the year 1367 that a Fraser figures in a written charter as Lord of the Barony of Lovat and Ard. The principal southern line of the house terminated as to heirs male in the person of the Sir Simon Fraser who was beheaded in London in 1306, a year after Sir William Wallace had suffered a similar fate. The headship of the clan then passed to Sir Simon's uncle, Sir Andrew Fraser, whose son, also named Simon,² equally devoted as his patriotic cousin to the house of Bruce, fell at the battle of Halidon Hill, A.D. 1333.

Now, apparently, both of these Simons are alluded to in the Fraser MS. in connection with Beaulieu. Of the first, who was distinguished from his father in the southern chronicles by the title of "filius," the writer remarks, calling him "the brave Sir Simon,"³ that he settled

¹ Strath Errick, on the east shore of Loch Ness to the north of Foyers.

² From whom the chiefs of the Lovat Frasers took their Gaelic patronymic "*Mac-Shimi*," or the Son of Simon. This Christian name had been popular in the earlier times of the family.

³ There is probably some confusion here on the writer's part between the two chiefs of the same name.

and married in the north during his father's lifetime, and that his first act after his marriage was "to settle marches betwixt him and the monks of Beauly." The MS. then proceeds to speak of the mother of him who was slain at Halidon Hill, and whom it styles the fifth laird. She spent, we are told, much of her time in acts of piety, contributing liberally towards *building*¹ and beautifying the monastery, and it was her intention to erect a stone bridge over the water of Beauly, for which purpose a great heap of stones was collected, "still to be seen in y^e river," called "Carn-na Baintighearna" (the lady's cairn); but death prevented her executing the work. This lady had estates in the county of Caithness, then within the sheriffdom of Inverness;² and the probabilities are that the clan Fraser got its first footing in the north through Sir Andrew, her husband, and that it was their son Simon, and not his cousin, who had to do with Beauly.

From the year 1333 the portraits given us of the Chiefs of Lovat become more distinct. Next to the Simon of Halidon Hill memory, the generally admitted first Fraser of Lovat, came Simon, his eldest son, who died unmarried, and was succeeded by his brother Hugo or Hugh, about A.D. 1348. Hugh is the Fraser of Lovat and Ard who first appears in the Moray Chartulary as such, A.D. 1367.³ This laird, we are told, was beloved by the clergy, who paid him every mark of esteem while he lived, and after his death gave him a princely burial. "The Bishop of Murray, Alexander Bar, and Tho^s. Tulloch, Bishop of Ross, w^t all their dignities, the Abbots of Kinloss and Fearn, the Priors of Pluscardine and Beaulie, with their orders, attended the funeral which appeared like a procession of churchmen, till the body was interred within the Church of Beaulie."⁴ He died in 1397 in his 70th year. Alexander was the next laird. In him, if the picture drawn be a true one, we have exhibited a character of devoted piety rarely found among laymen of that day, or indeed any other, and not too often among the clergy themselves. Unlike most of the nobles of "the age he lived in," "he cared not," we learn, "for

¹ Perhaps a re-building of some portion of the church, or an addition such as cloisters, &c., may be meant.

² Anderson.

³ "Dominus de Loveth, et Portionarius terrarum de Ard."

⁴ Fraser MS.

the noise and pomp of the court," but gave himself up to retirement and prayer, spending most of his time in the priory, "where he had the conversation of y^e prior and the monks and their regular canonical devotions." "It was pity," says the writer of the Lovat Memoirs,¹ "he was not a churchman, having often declared he would rather serve at God's altar than attain the highest state preferments. He was a pattern of primitive piety to all around him. He never mentioned y^e name of Jesus Christ but wth this respectful addition 'My Master.'" His education was at first conducted within the walls of the monastery at Beaulie, where he afterwards assisted the prior in beautifying and adorning the church and cloisters. At his expense a beautiful steeple of carved oak was erected on the western pinnacle of the building, and a curious bell placed in it. Before his death he devolved the charge of his affairs on his brother Hugh who succeeded him. He died in 1415. Alexander was never married, but the narrator of his extraordinary piety laconically informs us that he left one son Robert, commonly called by the country people "Rob-mac-amaiche," the monk's son, on account of his father's sanctity. From this Robert sprang one of the principal branches of the house of Fraser. Of Hugh Fraser, or as he is termed in the old monkish chronicles, Hutcheon Frezel, fifth Laird and first Lord or Baron of Lovat,² it is recorded that "he built the north work of y^e Church of Beulie and y^e Chapel of Holy Cross," and got the privilege of a fair at Beaulie, thereafter styled Cross Fair, held annually on the 3d day of May. He also erected a famous cross at Wellhouse, on the high road, which was afterwards brought to Beaulie, "where it still remains."³ This Hugh Fraser is supposed to have been created a lord of Parliament in the year 1431,⁴ and from his

¹ Referred to by the Author of the Fraser MS.

² According to Anderson. He says the Lovat family never had a patent of nobility. It is not known precisely how early they were classed with the peerage. In Scotland there is often confusion between the greater and lesser barons, *i.e.*, between peers proper and lairds of estates, from their having been indiscriminately styled "Dominus" in the early charters.

³ Fraser MS. and Anderson's Hist. In Anderson's "Highlands and Isles" the shaft of this cross is said to be still visible in Beaulie village, but I did not notice it.

⁴ Anderson's Hist. Though the Fraser MS. says it was the fourth of the name who first received this dignity, and that the Lordship was held under the Earls of Ross and Moray till their forfeiture.

time it is certain that the family of Lovat have been ranked among the Scottish Peerage.¹ He died in 1440, having married Janet Fenton, sister of the representative of the old lairds of Beaufort, and was buried at Beauly. His successor Hugh, fourth of the name, second Lord Lovat, was educated at Beauly under the care of James Reid, the prior, who "bred him a good scholar and devout man." He only lived to the age of 28, and was buried in the priory church. His eldest son Thomas, who also died young, was prior of Beauly, ad commendam.² Of the third Lord, we hear nothing in connection with the monastery. His successor, Hugh Fraser, fourth Lord Lovat, died at Beaufort Castle in 1524, and was buried at Beauly. His eldest son, Robert, by a second marriage, married Janet Gelly, heiress of Braky in Fife, and was killed we are told, at the Water of Beauly, by the monks.³ The particulars of this deed of violence it would have been interesting to learn, but the MS. which recites it does not seem to have added anything in the way of explanation to satisfy our curiosity. Some wanton act of sacrilege, perhaps, considering the period, something to do with the reforming tenets that were growing up in the land, may have exasperated the churchmen. Yet one of the MSS. speaks of this Robert as an amiable and esteemed individual. In 1521, an injunction was issued by Sylvester, "Nuncio of the Apostolic See," to the abbots of Kynlos and Fearn in favour of the "noble and potent Hugh Fraser of Loveth," respecting the lands of the Kirkton of Kilmoricht and the fishings of the same. It provided that a sum of L.5, 6s. 8d. was to be paid annually to the heirs and assigns of the late Thomas Fraser of Lovat for four barrels of salmon from the yearly fishings of the Ess of Kilmoricht, &c. This injunction was executed in 1532. *Hugh, seventh of the name, fifth in the peerage, procured an Act of Parliament for a weekly fair at Beauly. At that time there were three fairs held in the Vale, the fair of St Mauritius at Beaufort, All Saints' at Kilmorack, and of Michaelmas at Beauly. My Lord's retinue on the occasions when he rode to proclaim the fairs, was very imposing. In one of these ceremonials he is said to have had in his train three lords and*

¹ Anderson's Hist.

² Ibid. *ut supra*.

³ Calduthel MSS. of the Lovat family in possession of the Frasers of Calduthel. — *Anderson*.

six barons,¹ with all their followers in full armour. In 1540 he is known to have sat as a peer in parliament. Four years later, the bloody fight which took place at Loch Lochy between the Clanranald and the Frasers, cut him off, and with him his son, the Master of Lovat, and eighty gentlemen of his clan. Four Frasers, it is told, and seven of the Macdonalds, were all that escaped with life, and of these every man was wounded, only one, Fraser of Foyers, ultimately surviving.² The combat lasted twelve hours, and is said to have been the bloodiest ever fought in that part of the country. The bodies of Lord Lovat and his son were brought off the field next day by his people, and conveyed to Beauly for burial. The inscription over this lord's tomb was visible till the year 1746, and was as follows:³—"Hic jacet Hugo Dominus Fraser de Lovat qui fortissime Pugnans contra Reginalderios⁴ occubuit Julii 15. 1544." On the death of his father, the next son, Alexander, a youth of sixteen, succeeded. He had been put under charge of Robert Reid, who combined the functions of Bishop of Orkney, Abbot of Kinloss, and Prior or Com-mendator⁵ of Beauly, and who built a great mansion-house in Beauly, where, says the 1746 writer, "his arms is yet to be seen." This priestly dignitary appears to have been worthy of his emoluments, for he was eminent for generosity and hospitality. He kept an open house for the children of the principal gentry, and had at the same time under his roof as guests, Lord Lovat, his brother William, the lairds of Kintail, Foulis, and others. He also kept his "pleasure barge to transport him betwixt Kinloss and Beauly." Alexander, Lord Lovat, died in 1558, still a young man, and was laid with his predecessors in the Priory Church of Beauly.

In the year 1560, at an eventful period of Scottish history, Hugh, seventh baron, and twelfth laird of Lovat, was served heir to his deceased father. He was, like every one else, more or less mixed up with the factions and agitations which were in full force around the person of the beautiful but ill-fated Mary. He was a great intimate with Sir

¹ Lesser ones, or simple lairds doubtless.

² Fraser MS.—*Anderson*.

³ *Anderson*.

⁴ From Reginald, son of Somarled, ancestor of the Lords of the Isles.

⁵ This term now makes its appearance.

Walter Reid, brother to the Bishop of Orkney above-mentioned, and this Sir Walter I shall have to mention again in more immediate connection with the priory. As to his relations with the young Lord Lovat, the family MS. gives us a glimpse of them which is not without interest from the incidental mention of other personages :—

“ Among y^e other great acquaintance y^t Lord Lovat made then at court, he became very intimate with Sir Walter Reid and his lady. This Sir Walter was brother to y^e Bishop of Orkney, who was the great friend and patron of Alexander, Lord Lovat, and when y^e bishop was with others sent to France to transact y^e marriage of Queen Mary with y^e Dolphin, his brother, Sir Walter Reid, was, by an Act of Parliament, made commendator of these two monasteries of Kinloss and Beauli. He was Lord Lovat's relation by y^e house of Balnagown, and this acquaintance was of signal use to Lord Lovat in y^e purchase of y^e lands belonging to y^e priory of Beauli, as will appear afterwards.”

This Lord Lovat was one of the Lords of Association to whom the Queen surrendered herself after Bothwell's defeat and flight, and who confined her in Loch Leven. He also subscribed the bond for the defence of her son, James, which followed upon her forced resignation. Sir Walter, seeing the clouds which were storming up on the ecclesiastical horizon, lost no time in seeking what shelter he could. As prior and commendator, with consent of the Beauli monks, he got himself appointed heritable baillie of the priory by a charter dated in November 1571, and confirmed under the Great Seal in the following February. Finding this, however, to be an insufficient security, and fearful of falling a prey to some one of the powerful chiefs on the look out for crown grants of church property, he makes over *in toto* to the Lord Lovat, and his heirs male, the lands of the benefice—viz., the town and lands of Beaulie, Ardnacrase, Rixandown, Inch-rori, &c. Both concessions are made in the same year ;¹ and in 1573, scarcely two years afterwards, the unlucky prior, as if in disgust, resigns the priorate and commendatorship in favour of one Master John Fraser, who receives his appointment from King James VI. Lord Lovat died at Towie, in Aberdeenshire, on

¹ According to the “ Origines Parochiales ” the lands were not relinquished till 1573, after Sir Walter's resignation.

New Year's day 1577, some said of poison, and he must have had many enemies who would not scruple to get rid of him in that way. He was on his return home from Edinburgh, where he had gone as one of the confederate lords to consult with Morton on the affairs of the North. There was never, says the chronicler,¹ such a funeral seen in these parts (*i.e.*, about Beaulie) for grandeur and magnificence. There were upwards of 2000 men under arms that conveyed the body from Towie to Inverness, besides all the nobility and gentry in the North. They arrived at Lovat on the first of February, and his remains were laid among the ashes of his noble ancestors before the great altar in the Priory Church of Beaulie. According to the same account, this was the last funeral procession of the race of MacShimi which entered its walls, as hereafter the family burial-place was removed to Kirkhill. Another authority, however, says that Simon, the eighth Lord, who died in 1633, and a Sir Alexander Fraser of Doors, who died seven years before while a guest at Lovat, were both buried in St Catharine's aisle within Beaulie Church.² The last we hear of the priory in connection with the Lovat family was during the minority of the said Lord Simon. His uncle, Thomas Fraser of Knockie and Strichen, having, not without some trouble, got himself appointed tutor to the young lord in 1576, takes the first opportunity of seeing the dispossessed monks of Beaulie reinstated in their cells and provided for during the rest of their days. He then turns his attention to a question of disputed marches between the priory lands and those of Mackenzie of Kintail, which had long been in an unsettled state. The two parties were very nearly going to battle on the subject; but, on the tutor bringing an imposing force to the front, which advanced to the banks of the Conan, the chief of the clan Kenzie grew alarmed for his own property, and made overtures which resulted in an amicable adjustment of their differences. On the 13th October 1576, a tack or lease is granted by the prior of Beaulie, with the chapter's consent, of the vicarage tithes of the parish of Canveneth³ to Simon, Master of Lovat, son and apparent heir of Hugh, Lord Lovat. About the same time Strichen, the "good tutor," as he was called, appoints a regality court at Beaulie to

¹ Lovat Memoirs, quoted in Fraser MS.

² Wardlaw MSS.

³ Also spelt Cornwath.

confirm the late lord's patent and rights to the priory lands, which, we have seen, had been absolutely surrendered to him by the late prior, Sir Walter Reid. Finally, in 1592, after the general surrender of church benefices to the crown, Lord Simon is granted by the King a new charter of the lands of Beauly, which are to be henceforth held as a barony.

The next great clan or family we have to notice in connection with Beauly is that of Mackenzie, the chief representative of which was the house of Kintail in Ross-shire, having as their principal seat the beautiful region on the north side of Loch Duich, with the castle of Eilean Donan on an island in the loch, now a picturesque ruin. The "Domini de Kintail" became peers of Scotland as Lords Kintail, and afterwards Earls of Seaforth,—but this was not till post-reformation times. With the exception of the Campbells, this noble race was at one time the most powerful in the Western Highlands,¹ having sway over nearly the whole extent of the large county of Ross, but their invariable adherence to the Stuart cause resulted in the attainder of the Earl of Seaforth in 1715 for his participation in Mar's rebellion, and the old property has now passed into other hands. Notwithstanding the disappearance of many of the collateral branches of this family there still remain a sufficiently goodly number to show how widespread and influential the Mackenzies must have been. Beauly, we know, was the burial-place of the later Kintail chiefs, also of some of the branch families of Mackenzie, probably those that were within comparatively easy reach of it. Most fortunately the tomb of one is still to be seen within the ruins of the Priory Church, engraven, a still rarer circumstance, with a very perfect and legible inscription giving the date of 1491. Of this tomb more presently.

The first noticeable ancestor credited to the Mackenzies is one Colin Fitzgerald,² who is supposed to have figured at the battle of Largs, and received for his services the wardship of the Castle of Eilean Donan or Danton³ from Walter Stewart, Earl of March and Carrick, along with a charter of the lands of Kintail, dated A.D. 1266. Having married a

¹ Gregory's Hist.

² Chief of the Geraldines the writer calls him, which gives a wide margin for an antecedent pedigree.—*Mackenzie* MSS. in Advocates' Library.

³ *Ibid.* So named, he says, from its having been built for the "daunting of the Isles."

daughter of the chief of the Macmahons, the former possessors of Kintail, Colin had a son, Kenneth ; and, as Fitzgerald it is alleged was a stranger in the country, this Kenneth, being the first chief of native blood, came to be the ancestor from whom the clan patronymic of MacChainich (or Mackenzie) was derived. He, we are told, married Morba, daughter of Macdougall of Lorne, and sister's daughter to Cummin, Earl of Athole. The next Kenneth distinguished himself by his devotion to the royal house of Bruce, and held Eilean Donan Castle in his interest, which fortress, it was afterwards the boast of the Mackenzies, had never been commanded by the Bruce's enemies, either English or Scots. Of Kenneth, the third laird, nicknamed "Nistroir"¹ from his big nose, Murdoch Dow² (M'Kynich), who is granted a charter of the Kintail lands by King David I. in 1362, and Murdoch "Nichroich," the fifth laird, (perhaps another sizeable-nosed one), there is nothing to record in connection with Beaulieu. The last named Murdoch had to wife, first, Anna, daughter of Macdougall of Lorne,³ by whom was Kenneth, sixth laird, and from a second marriage came Hector, first of the Gairloch Mackenzies.² This Kenneth, sixth of Kintail,⁴ is the chief whom the beautiful tomb, with recumbent effigy, at Beaulieu, was erected to commemorate. Of him we know something more than of the others. He was twice married, his first wife, Margaret, being a sister to the celebrated Donald Dubh, or the black Lord of the Isles, (who also styled himself Earl of Ross). By her he had one son named Kenneth Oig (young Kenneth), who was one of the hostages kept in confinement at Edinburgh Castle for the good behaviour of the Island chiefs, but, having made his escape thence, was followed and killed in the Torwood by the laird of Buchanan. Sir Kenneth's second wife was Anne,⁵ daughter of Hugh, third Lord Lovat, and the MS. gives a curious account of the rough and ready way in which he made his proposals for the lady's hand. "Sir Kenneth," says Anderson, "went to Lovat, accompanied by 200 armed men, and besieged

¹ What Gaelic this is I cannot make out unless it be a corruption of "Na Sròine mhòr."

² Mackenzie MSS. in Adv. Lib.

³ De Ergadia, also an ancient and powerful, we may say a princely, family.

⁴ Anderson calls him by mistake the eighth laird.

⁵ Mackenzie MSS.

the house. Lord Lovat demanded his purpose, when he coolly told him he wanted to marry his daughter, Ann, and vowed friendship or revenge as his suit was received. His lordship gave his consent to the match, provided the young lady was favourable. She fortunately proved submissive, and Mackenzie returned with his bride."¹ From the same authority we learn that Sir Kenneth divorced his first wife, and afterwards, namely in 1491, obtained from the Pope a sanction for this irregular proceeding. If so, the sanction was just in time for the peace of his conscience, as his tomb tells us he died on the 7th of February 1491.² He is the recorded hero of a great fight which took place near Park between the Mackenzies and a nephew of the Lord of the Isles, one Gillespie M'Donald, who must have been a connection of his divorced wife, and who was, partly perhaps on that account, in arms against the lord of Kintail. The Islanders were in considerable numbers, but Mackenzie, with a hundred bowmen sent by the Master of Lovat to assist him, was too much for M'Donald, whose men, when their enemies got within half a mile of them, became alarmed at the sight of the hostile clans in such force. "Kintail," says the MS., "asked Glaissan Fraser (Gow), who commanded the Lovat bowmen, how he would behave if he were in command that day."³ "By St Mary of Kirkhill," was Fraser's reply, "I would soon be in y^e heart of them."³ After this engagement such of the Macdonalds as escaped, being ignorant of the country, were nearly all drowned in the water of the Conan. This action was fought in the year 1478. Sir Kenneth is said to have been named Kenneth "Iolair" (or the Eagle) by the Highlanders on account of this victory.⁴ Sir Kenneth was the first of his family buried at Beauly, all his predecessors having been interred at Icolmkil.⁵ He left four sons and two daughters, the eldest, John, having afterwards served as privy councillor to James V. and Queen Mary. Roderick, the third son, from whom sprang the Mackenzies of Achilty, Faerburn, Ardross, and others, died at Contin in 1533, and was buried at Beauly. The families of Suddy, Ord,

¹ Hist. of Frasers, p. 70.

² That is, 1491-92. Anderson has evidently mistaken the dates here, as he puts Sir Kenneth's death at about 1506-7.

Fraser MSS.

⁴ Mackenzie MSS.

⁵ Anderson

Corrovalzie, Highfield, Inverlal, Little Findon, Scatwell, and others, claim Kenneth, the fourth son, as their ancestor. He fell at Flodden Field on the 9th September 1513. Sir Kenneth, we are informed, was knighted "for being highly instrumental in reducing his fierce countrymen to the blessings of civilised life;"¹ but it may be doubted if, in that stormy age, the golden spurs would be conferred on any one for such peaceful services; moreover, the lord of Kintail's mode of courtship was not, as we have seen, quite of the most civilised kind. The tomb of this chief² is an arched niche in the portion of wall separating the main aisle from the north transept, which latter formed a side chapel or sacristy, apparently the chapel of "Holy Cross" built by Hugh, first Lord Lovat, and is probably what the family writer means by "Mackenzie's aisle." This monument is of the kind known as "high" or "altar" tombs. The niche has an ornamental canopy facing into the chapel, of the usual style of this kind of enriched work. The arch is a pointed one with square crockets, terminating in a pretty finial, and there is a plain shaft alongside the niche, which latter contains a recumbent figure. This figure, a full length one, is carved in stone richly elaborated, in this respect occupying a middle place between the ruder effigies of the Highlands, and the exquisite work of our mediæval alabaster sculptures to be met with in England. The front of the tomb below the figure is panelled into six trefoil headed compartments. On the side of the nave the niche has been subsequently bricked up, leaving only the projecting sill and the side shafts. It is on the sill that the inscription is written, the date being carried on up one of the shafts. It runs thus, and is in the old English character—

¹ Anderson.

² Sketches of this tomb, the two other mediæval ones described further on, a view of the church with a few bits of its detail, and an approximate plan of the building, kindly sent me by a brother officer, were exhibited at the meeting for purposes of general illustration. It was not till after the proofs of this paper were in my hands that the existence of an elaborate set of architectural drawings of Beauly, lately prepared by Mr Anderson, architect, F.S.A. Scot., was made known to me. These drawings, which I have since had the pleasure of seeing (along with lithographs for the Spring Gardens Sketch Club), are executed in the most minute architectural detail.

Hic jacet . Ranucus . m kyngch
 d'us . de Kyntapl . q . obiit hii . die
 Februarii . u . di m.cccc.lxxxxi.

The feet of the figure rest upon a dog, the head upon a double cushion, and the hands are joined in prayer. The detail of the armour is complete: feet and elbow plates, spurs, sword belt with its slings, the dagger, or misericorde, as it was called, over the right thigh, and a short tunic of mail reaching a little below the waist, with the sword-belt carried over it. The succeeding lairds appear to have all been buried at Beaully till comparatively modern times. The Fentons and Grahams have already been spoken of, and if to these names we add that of Chisholm or Chesholm, a family anciently settled in Strath Affrick, members of which appear occasionally in early documents, and whose burial-place was Beaully, the list of the families connected with the monastery appears to be complete.

We now return to the history of the monastery itself.¹ The monkish records are often unsatisfactorily brief, containing little beyond the names of the priors and witnesses to the charters; but still these scanty details are better than nothing. In the year 1255 a charter is granted by Lawrence the Soldier or Knight, son of the nobleman warder of Inverness, devoting all his estate in Bromiholm and the island to St John the Baptist, “de bello loco,” and the prior. It is dated at Rosmarc on Jove’s day (or Thursday) next after the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross. In 1275 there is one by Master Henry of Foltyngham, rector of the church of Tarnedale. After reciting that there had been a controversy between him and the prior of Beaully, the charter continues:—“At length . . . on Jove’s day, within the octave of the Epiphany, anno 1274, in the cathedral church of Elgyn . . . the arbiters gave judgment as follows.” That the said Master Henry was to pay tithes of all his land appertaining to the church of Tarnedal for eight years “from next term to Pentecost of 1275.” . . . “That each half-year the brethren were to be entitled to

¹ My information here is principally derived from the Orig. Parochiales and a number of transcripts from the “Diplomata” of Macfarlane, supplied to Dr John Stuart by Mr Cosmo Innes, and very kindly lent me by the former.

claim the said Master Henry's services, with two horses, 'et duobum gacionibus' (whatever that may mean), and that he was faithfully to discharge all due expenses, besides giving his protection and services to the prior and convent for the said period of eight years."¹

In the years 1341, 1356, and 1357, Robert Prior of Beaulieu appears in record. In 1362 Symon is the superior of the monastery. Between 1336 and 1372 a Sir Manrico, prior "belli loci," witnesses a charter by William Earl of Ross. "In the Ides of March," the third year of his pontificate,³ Pope Gregory XI. issues a bull to the prior and convent, confirming all their liberties. The Bull is dated from Leghorn. In 1380 there is a charter by John of Urchard, perpetual Vicar of Abertarff, respecting certain tithes of fishings at that place. It is given at Beaulieu, on the Sunday next before the feast of St Peter.

In 1458 we have a curious record of the value of an article of food, which, if not a necessary of life, may at least be said to give a spice to it. This year, the king's chamberlain north of the water of Spey, in rendering his accounts for the year preceding, takes credit for a sum of L.4 which was paid by him to the Prior of Beaulieu as due from the fermes of the baronies of Avach and Eddirdale by ancient infestment; and also for the sum of 3s. 4d., also paid the said prior, as the price of 1 *lb.* of *pepper* due to him yearly on the same account.⁴

Under date A.D. 1471 is noted the death of Alexander Frisale, prior of Bewley.⁵ About 1478-9 the priory was repaired, at the expense of the superior, a natural son of Alexander of Kintail,⁶ who is there buried. In 1480 appear in record Sir John Fynlay, prior, and Sir Patrick Morra and Sir John Duncan, monks.⁷ The same year, William Bishop of Moray addresses the Lord Fynlay, vicar of the parish church of Wardlaw, "in our diocess," regarding the vicariate to which he had succeeded, *vice* Donald Galle deceased. In this document the names of the prior and monastery of Bewley are introduced by the bishop, apparently in some connection with the presentation and "our contribution" to the parish

¹ Transcript Chart. Beaulieu.

³ A.D. 1373-4, on Keith's Computation.

⁴ Orig. Paroch. (Exchequer Rolls, No. 227).

⁵ Orig. Paroch. (Exchequer Rolls, No. 227).

⁶ Mackenzie MSS. and Anderson's Hist.

² Orig. Parochiales.

⁷ Orig. Parochiales.

church of Conveth. William Jackson, procurator, and the Lord Alexander Fany—afterwards a later record tells us Vicar of Conveth—are also mentioned as priests of the diocese. The charter is “given under our round seal at our palace of Spynie,” on the 7th September.¹ Sir John Fynlay appears to have been succeeded as superior of the monastery by Hugh Fresal, who died “extra Romanam curiam,”² for what offence does not appear. His death must have taken place about 1496–7. In 1497 Dougal M’Rory (Roderici) is presented by Pope Alexander VI. to the priorate, whose fruits he alleged were not above L.40 per annum. The bull and execution thereof, and the form of oath taken by the said Dougal, were given in the Chartulary of Beaulay.³ Apropos of this Prior Dougal, the Beaulay Chartulary gives us a letter of censure addressed to him by James Courtois (Quartus), general of the Vallis Caulium order, the details of which relieve the somewhat monotonous uniformity of the monasterial records. The letter is dated on the 18th of December 1506, and in it the writer styles himself “Brother James Courtois, prior of the monastery of Vallis Caulium, head or general of that order in the Duchy of Burgundy, near Chatillon on the Seine.” The cause of the reprimand was as follows. A certain Scottish priest, named William Thomson, had appeared at Vallis Caulium, and presented some letters unsigned and unsealed, purporting to be from the Prior of Beaulay, and addressed to the Prior-general of Vallis Caulium. In these letters the Prior of Beaulay complains that the Bishop of Ross claimed a general jurisdiction and right of visitation over his priorate to which he had no title. In reply, the prior-general informs the superior of Beaulay that he is quite wrong, that in France all the houses of the order were regularly visited by the bishops, and that, at the same time, he must recollect they were but a limited community, numbering only thirteen small houses. He cannot supply a copy of the institution and confirmation of the privileges of the order, as requested by the Prior of Beaulay, as the original is kept at their treasury at Bivion, and he (the prior-general), by reason of ill health and the approaching Feast of the Nativity (Christmas day), cannot go there himself for it. That the Prior of Beaulay was to blame for never having sent to him for a proper legal induction into the priorate, and he therefore orders him,

¹ Transcripts Chart. Beaulay.

² Orig. Parochiales.

³ Macfarlane.

under the usual penalties, to appear in a chapter of the order, to be held on the next Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross (3d May 1507), when he would learn their statutes, privileges, &c. Further, he complains that the Priors of Beaulieu had of late failed to attend quadrennially at Vallis Caulium, either in person or by deputy, as the prior's last predecessor (Hugh Frisel) had promised they should do. Nor had any of the salmon come to him from Beaulieu which the same Hugh Frisel had undertaken should in future be sent to the prior-general's agents at Bruges or Valenciennes. However, concludes the general, he hears the Prior of Beaulieu is an upright and pious man, and he hopes these things will be rectified, and that next summer the Prior of Beaulieu will pay up all arrears of fish, &c., &c.¹ Besides giving us an interesting glimpse of the relations and discipline of a Romish confraternity, this letter shows how the limited export trade of that period between Scotland and the Continent must to some extent have been affected by this kind of ecclesiastical intercommunion. In the May preceding the receipt of this admonition, Prior Dougal had been given, we find, by the same Courtois a commission empowering him to visit the monastery of Ardqhattan, in the west, and make such regulations there as he should find requisite for observing the rule and constitution of the order.² Probably Father Thomson's batch of letters had not then come to hand. In the same year (1506), Pope Julius II. issues a Bull in favour of the said Dougal and the convent of Beaulieu, threatening with excommunication all who had interfered with their property, unless restitution was made.³ This Bull was not executed till 1513. On the 11th May 1512, the superior dates at the monastery a deed of presentation to the perpetual vicarage of Conweth church, vacant by the death of the late (domini) Donald Watson, priest, who had received the same presentation from the prior in 1493, in the room of Alexander Fany (above mentioned), deceased. In 1529 King James V. promoted Master James Haswell, chaplain of St Margaret's Chapel, in Edinburgh, to be Prior of Beaulieu. Next year Robert Reid, already spoken of in connection with the Lovat family, received the priorate or commendatorship of Beaulieu, in addition to the abbacy he already held. Ten years later, namely, in 1540,

¹ Transcripts Chart. Beaulieu, and Orig. Paroch.

² Transcripts Chart. Beaulieu and Keith.

³ Transcripts Chart. Beaulieu.

the bishopric of Orkney came to swell the other dignities of this prelate. In 1537 he received seven young men as monks into the priory of Beauly, and at that time, we are told, was engaged in preparing material to build or rebuild the nave of the church.¹ In 1540 he transferred five of the Beauly monks to the abbey of Kinloss, to the tutorship of one Ferrerius,² a French ecclesiastic. Their names were Sir Thomas Togay, Sir David Dason, Sir John Crawford, Sir James Pop, and Sir Gilbert Gray. The same year the commendator builds the nave of the priory church of Beauly at great expense, roofs it with oak, and repairs the belfry, which had been struck with lightning.³ On the death of James V., in 1542, Ferrerius sends the five monks back to Beauly, and returns to France. In 1544 Bishop Robert Reid, who appears to have taken a great interest in Beauly, substituted for the old rickety prior's house a new one, large and elegant, with six vaults below⁴—a requisite addition, doubtless, considering the open-handed hospitality he was in the habit of dispensing. This very commendable commendator died in 1558.

Religious confraternities, though they were in the main enlisted on the side of law and order, were not, as it is well seen from history, by any means always so. When an individual became obnoxious to a community of churchmen, they found in too many instances a summary way of getting rid of him. The Beauly brethren and the clergy of the diocese of Ross appear to have been no exception to their class. In 1543, Sir James Haisty,⁵ a monk of Beauly, found surety before a civil court to appear in answer to a charge of having aided and abetted the Bishop of Ross and his accomplices in oppressing one Master Gawin Dunbar, treasurer of the diocese, by laying hands on him within the cathedral to the effusion of his blood.⁶ Another case of violence we have already met with in the murder of one of Lord Lovat's sons, said to have been committed by the monks of Beauly.⁷

Between 1561–6 the records give us an enumeration of the rental of the priory, which appears to have been in various kinds, viz., silver, victual, mutton, malt, meal, oats, poultry, salmon, &c.⁸ At the Refor-

¹ Origines Parochiales.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ In Hutton's collections, a MS. volume in Advocates' Library, Haisty is noted as prior.

⁶ Origines Parochiales.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

mation, the monasterial income, according to Playfair, was L.136, 13s. 4d. Scots; oats, 14 chalders 2 bolls 3 firlots 3½ pecks; marts, 10; sheep, 20; 21 dozen of fowls; and 2 lasts and 6 barrels of salmon.¹ In 1568, Walter Reid, already alluded to, the last Prior but one, gives a tack of part of the lands of the benefice to "our louit seruent, John Clerk in Bewlie," and failing him, Alexander Clerk, his lawful son, for nineteen years following Whitsunday of 1568. This deed is subscribed by the Prior, Brother John Crawford, James Rose, Sir Thomas Taynam, monk, and George Moray.²

In 1573, Walter Reid was succeeded by Master John Fraser, the last of the superiors of the priory, and the history of the monastery closes with the dissolution of the religious houses, when, as we have seen, the church property of Beaully passed into other hands.³

I now proceed to notice the existing remains. The church is one of those long narrow ones without aisles so frequently met with in the west of Scotland. It consists of nave and choir, extending to a length of 136 feet by 21 or thereabouts inside walls,⁴ and two small side buildings so disposed as to form a transept, making the church cruciform. These wings, however, are not a perfect pair, the southern one being smaller than the other, and not placed symmetrically with it. It was probably a later addition; and where the transept came, the width of the new building would have to be increased, so as to take it in, as there was already a large window in the south wall. The style appears to be an early specimen of Middle or Second Pointed Gothic, and may date, Mr Mure thinks, from about the first decade of the 14th century.⁵

¹ Playfair's Stat. Description of Scotland (Anderson). In the Libellus Taxationum the Priory of Beaully is valued at 400 merks, and in the Taxatio, sec. 16, it is rated at L 62.

² Hutton makes note of an original feu charter dated the next year, 1574, wherein Lord Lovat grants to John Mackenzie of Gairloch, and Agnes Fraser, the lands of Ardnagrask, within the Barony and Priory of Beaully, with all rights, liberties, and privileges.—*MSS. Collections*.

³ Origines Parochiales.

⁴ The general plan of the building appears to be very similar to that of the Abbey Church (as far as we can make it out) at Saddell in Kintyre, described in Vol. VIII. of the Society's Proceedings. In both cases the lengths I obtained by pacing are identical, viz., 134 feet, the mean width of Saddell being 25 as against 21 feet in Beaully. These figures, of course, are not to be taken too absolutely.

⁵ Mure's Church Architecture of Scotland.

There are no architectural distinctions dividing the aisle and choir beyond a change in the character of the details. The walls and most of the windows are in a pretty entire state, though the roof is gone. The east or choir window, which is the least perfect, was a very wide one, the jambs approaching quite close to the angles of the building. These jambs and the soffits of its arch evidently formed a continuous set of mouldings,¹ and, according to Mure, the window must have been of six or seven lights. The west gable is entire, and contains three long narrow windows without mullions, the central one elevated a little above the others, almost an exact counterpart, only in miniature, of the window arrangement in the west front of Wells Cathedral, which is known to be Early English. Under these is a shallow ogee headed niche, and under that again a circular headed doorway of two roll and hollow orders with quasi shafts in the jambs.² Over the doorway, on the outside, is a weather moulding, terminating in plain corbels. On one is a pretty monogram of I · H · S., and on the other a heart between a pair of hands and a pair of feet. Higher up in the gable is a saint's niche or tabernacle, with a small panel on the sill, having a stag's head and Bishop Reid's initials, R. R., on it.³ The remaining windows are of varied pattern. In the choir are three long pointed ones on either side pretty high up, with a plain moulding carried over the heads of their interior openings, and continued so as to fill up each intervening space with a smaller arch giving a graceful effect. These windows have a single mullion, forming a triplet of lights. On the south side, in the clear-story, are three small spherically triangulated windows enclosing a trefoil light, which is not at all a common type. There are three piscina niches, one below the triangular windows, with another square niche beside it, and another a recess, with a neat double cinque-foil arch over it and containing two basins, situated in the south wall immediately to the right of the high altar. The third is on the outside of the north wall, a little west of the transept,—with a doorway near it now built up,—which would lead to

¹ Cordiner's drawing of the church shews this.

² Mure.

³ The date of this tabernacle may therefore with tolerable certainty be put down as 1540, the year the bishop is recorded to have repaired the nave and belfry (*vide ante*, p. 455).

the impression that it had at one time been intended to fill up this angle with a chapel. The stoup, or holy-water stone, a small plain basin 16 inches square by 10 deep, projects from the wall near the west door. To the left of the doorway, after entering the south transept, or St Katharine's aisle as it was called, from the nave, and exactly opposite Sir Kenneth Mackenzie's tomb, is another semi-circular recess, obviously also designed for a monumental effigy, but afterwards built up. Through this portion of built-up wall a small square recess has been pierced. It cannot have been meant for a genuine squint, as the high altar is not visible from it, but it may have been used to pass the sacred elements into the chapel after consecration. The walls of the church, which are $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, I should judge by the eye to have stood 22 or 23 feet to the wall-plate, and the roof had a steep pitch of about 15 feet more of vertical height. The north transept building is said to have been a chapter house, but as cathedrals alone had chapters, it is more probable it was a sacristy or side chapel. It had a vaulted roof, with a pair of diagonal ribs and two cross springers, of which the corbels only remain. The church was buttressed throughout, though the buttresses have entirely disappeared. The proprietor, I was told, intended at one time to restore them, and some of them have lately been restored, with the intention of reappropriating the church for Roman Catholic worship; but, finding there were difficulties with some public board of conservancy, he stopped the work.

The arrangement of the Priory buildings was what we should expect to find in a church of the kind. The south-west angle formed by the nave and transept appears to have been filled up with a range of dwellings, as at Saddell and elsewhere, one chimney only remaining at the corner of the western gable. These buildings or cloisters would seem to have been lean-tos, as a projecting moulding underneath the clear-story runs the whole length of the nave, and round the transept as far as its western angle. The broken prolongations of the walls are still visible, and from them it is evident the cloisters were carried out some distance in a southerly direction beyond the transept. At the north-west angle of the sacristy is a small hexagonal tower, with the remains of a spiral staircase in it, evidently the belfry of the church. In early English

architecture these bell turrets were placed in various positions, and often took a polygonal form.¹

The state of preservation of these interesting ruins is a satisfactory contrast to the unsightly and neglected condition of so many others. The situation of the priory is well deserving of its name, commanding, as it does, a charming view of the Beauly Firth, with the Black Isle beyond, and a background of heathy hills on the inland side. It stands on a flat of rich soil by the river side, and a large field adjoining is still pointed out as the site of a very fine orchard which belonged to the monks, where two solitary apple trees of unknown age are yet to be seen. One of them certainly looks ancient enough, and is said to be the largest in girth of any in this part of Scotland.

Of the ancient tombs I have already described one, that of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail. The interior of the church is what Cordiner describes it to have been in his time, full of gravestones, but they are almost all modern ones, belonging principally to Frasers, Mackenzies, and Chisholms. Out of these, in fact, after a careful search, I could only find two of the mediæval period, which seems unaccountable, considering the long line of the Lovat chiefs known to have been buried here.

Probably a more thorough investigation might bring others to light, but to carry this out, many of the later slabs would have to be taken up from their present position. If St Catharine's Chapel, besides the choir, was the Lovat burial-place, as the Wardlaw account says it was, the tombstones must all have been removed, for not one is now to be seen there. Of the two pre-Reformation slabs, the smaller is of oblong shape, of the usual length, with an incised wheel pattern cross upon it, and near the right-hand edge what I imagine to have been a long sword, the hilt of which has disappeared. The long irregular-shaped panel between the sword and shaft of the cross was probably intended for an inscription. The incisions are not deeply cut, and I should say this slab was late mediæval. The modern initials A.G., KMC., referring most likely to some one named Kenneth M'Kenzie, have been mercilessly cut right across the middle of the shaft of the cross, and disfigure it very much. This slab

¹ Parker's Glossary. The "New Statistical Account" states that "the ruins bear no trace of turrets or steeples, and are entirely destitute of sculpture or ornament"—a loose assertion, to say the least of it.

tainly had much declined in later ages." He adds, that "in the vaults of the abbey there are some remains of bodies found in the stone coffins. On the lids of these are warriors well carved, and in fine relief. These have Latin inscriptions in old characters round the margin, which seem to be dated in the fifteenth century, but are in general so much defaced, it is impossible to copy them."¹ Accompanying these remarks we have two views of the church, which are by no means unlike the place, though spoilt to modern ideas by the introduction of a pile of slabs huddled into the foreground, one across another, in the stiffest manner conceivable, by way of giving a comprehensive illustration of swords, crosses, and warriors all in one.

As for Dr Macculloch, he does condescend to mention the name of Beaulieu in one of his letters to Sir Walter Scott; but it is only to make short work of it. After adopting Cordiner's statement, almost word for word, as to the large number of the tombstones within the building, he dismisses the subject with the assertion, that "the church is neither picturesque nor interesting, being built of a dark red sandstone, and without any features of architecture to atone for its disagreeable raw colour."² Such a remark from so able, observant, and racy a writer would seem strange in the present day, when every relic of real antiquity is guarded as a treasure, and can hardly be too minutely sketched or described. But we have to remember that the writer lived at a time when ideas of architecture, church architecture especially, were only just emerging from the lowest ebb they had ever sunk to, and the taste of the educated could think of nothing worthier to imitate than the pompous façades and sham temples of a bastard-classic school. Besides which, it is very doubtful if Macculloch personally knew anything more of Beaulieu than could be seen from a post-chaise, as he declares there was nothing to the north of Inverness, including the scenery along all the various roads leading to the west coast, which would repay the trouble of looking for. And we all know by experience, that what we have ourselves passed by without examining, it is often convenient to set down as not worth

¹ It seems extraordinary he should have overlooked the very perfect Mackenzie inscription.

² Macculloch's Highlands and Islands.

examination. We have seen that the original name of Beaulieu¹ was "Ach-na-baidh," plain or field of the estuary. In the end of last century the place was locally known as "Vanechan," or the place of the friars; and the river as "Avin-na-Manich," "the monk's river."²

I shall conclude this notice with the mention of two ghost stories relating to the priory. In the north wall of the church is an imprint shaped like a human hand,³ which is thus explained. For some time a ghostly visitant was said to have been seen in the church, and people feared to go near the place after sunset. A certain tailor, however, engaged to finish two pair of hose in it on a certain night. Accordingly, at the appointed hour he arrived within the dark and silent walls, and began his work. He had not long been engaged before a gigantic spectre made its appearance, and stretched out a skeleton arm, exclaiming in a curdling voice, "Behold, tailor, a great hand without flesh and blood." The only reply vouchsafed by the tailor was, "I see that, and I sew this;" and by the time these mutual parleyings had been thrice repeated, the man of the needle had completed his task, and was skurrying off with his hose. With uplifted hand the spectral form pursued, but the plucky tailor escaped, the blow which the ghostly hand intended for his head, taking effect on the wall, and leaving the mark still visible.⁴ This would not be a bad addition to the collection of stories in the "Night Side of Nature," and it is a great pity to disturb such a tale in any way. But it is necessary to note, that the identical story, with scarcely a variation in detail, is told of Saddell Abbey; and therefore we must conclude there were two congenial spirits in the two places, who were both well aware that there might be a connection between tailors and geese.

The other legend, relating to the birth, in 1666, of Hugh eleventh Lord Lovat, is picturesquely told by a well-known author,⁵ and I take the liberty of quoting it in his own words:—"At the time of this child's birth, it is recorded that round the old mansion and the still older priory of Beauly 'a wondrous blaze was seen to gleam,' and a voice called on him who would dare to look into the future fate of the mighty race of

¹ There was also a Cistercian abbey of this name near Southampton, founded by King John in 1204

² Origines Parochiales.

³ New Stat. Acc. (Kilmorack).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ J. H. Burton: Life of Lord Lovat.

MacShimi, to enter the sacred roof and take from the altar the scroll on which their weird was inscribed by no mortal hands. The tutor of Lovat, who appears to have been the same with our hero's father, was the person who dared to seize the mystic scroll. It was reported to the clansmen to be written in an ancient and obsolete character, on a venerable shred of parchment, and to predict a train of evils coming from the rival sept of the Mackenzies, only to be obviated by the Frasers remaining united and placing trust in each other." Hugh had a large black spot on his upper lip, whence he derived the name of "Mac Shimi Ball dhu," or the black spotted son of Simon. Three other Highland chieftains, it appears, were at this time distinguished by physical deformities—Mc Keinich Glindu (black-kneed Mackenzie), "Squint-eyed" Mackintosh (Mac-an-Tochich Claon), and Shisalach Came, or Chisholm of the crooked eyes.¹

As an instance of the desecration of the ancient church fabrics which was carried on in Scotland after the Reformation, I may mention that in building the citadel of Inverness, 1652-7, recourse was had to the monasteries of Beaulieu and Kinloss, the bishop's castle of Chanonry, the Greyfriars' Church and St Mary's Chapel at Inverness, for the purpose of supplying the stonework.

The latest reference I find with regard to the ruins of Beaulieu is by General Hutton, who notes a paper, dated 2d May 1815, arranging to invite subscriptions for the repair of the church from certain gentlemen who had their family burial-places there. The object is stated to be "for repairing the breaches in the walls, and particularly for raising and building up the east end of the church, by which idle persons enter and loiter about to the detriment of the place, and to prevent any access but by the west door." The parties to be consulted were the families of Lovat and Gairloch, The Chisholm, M'Lean of Craigs Coirie, and the Frasers of Newtown Ayis and Eskadale.