

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Culdees of Brechin.—Whether they merely constituted the Episcopal Chapter?—Of those at Dunblane.—Of the supposed Foundation at Muthel.—Of that of Monimusk.—Culdees at Portmoak,—Scone,—Kirkcaldy,—Culross,—Mailros.

THAT *Brechin* was, in an early age, a distinguished seat of the Culdees, appears from what we find in the Pictish Chronicle: “This is he who gave the great city of Brechin to the Lord.”¹ In this manner does the ancient writer point out our Scottish king Kenneth, commonly reckoned the third of that name, who began to reign in the year 970.

In a work lately published, it is said: “That there was a bishop established among the Culdees at Brechin, before the erection of the bishopric, by David I., is certain from his

¹ Hic est qui tribuit magnam civitatem Brechne Domino. Innes's Essay, Append. p. 788.

charter of erection, which was granted, *Episcopo, et Kelledeis, in ecclesia de Breichen*. Dalrymple's Coll. p. 219. [leg. 249.]"¹ But, undoubtedly, the mode of expression used proves nothing more than that *from this time* there was a bishop here. When David granted a charter, erecting Brechin into a bishopric, it may naturally be supposed, that he had previously fixed on one to fill this station; and that he gave him the title, as was frequently done, before his actual instalment. At any rate, from an ancient charter, granted before the erection of the bishopric, it may be presumed that the Culdees here had only an abbot among them. For I will not carry the matter so far as Sir James Dalrymple does, who, in the very passage referred to, reasons thus: "In the charter of Balchristin,—amongst the witnesses is Leodus *Abbas de Breichen*; which is a clear evidence that at that time Brechin was not erected into a bishopric, and that Leod was abbot there."²

"At Brechin," says our industrious and learned antiquary Goodall, "the Culdees continued yet much longer," than they had done at Dunblane, "to be the dean and chapter. Bricius their prior is a witness to some of Turpin's charters; and after him Prior Mallebride attests divers charters by the Bishops Turpin, Ralph, Hugh, and Gregory. The designation given him by the bishops is *Prior Keledorum nostrorum*, 'Prior of our Culdees,' or 'Prior of Brechin;' and sometimes only *Prior*. The Culdees, like other chapters of epis-

¹ Caledonia, 1. 430, Note (y).

² Collections, p. 249.

copal sees, gave confirmations of charters granted by their bishops, some of which are still extant," &c. ¹

From what is here said, one would naturally conclude, that it appeared from ancient writs, that the prior and Culdees formally constituted the chapter of Brechin; and of course, that the Prior was the *Dean*. But this was not the case. To what dependence soever on the bishop the Culdees may have been reduced, it is evident that they had not been absolutely cast into the mould of a mere chapter. For, in the charter of Ralph, Bishop of Brechin, *De Procurationibus*, besides the designations, *Gregorio Archidiacono*, and *Matheo Decano de Brechyn*, distinct mention is made of Mallebryde as *Priore Keledcorum de Brech.* ² This Matthew is, in another charter of the same Ralph, designed *Decano nostro*; ³ and in one of Turpin, *Matheo Decano de Brechyn.* ⁴

In Turpin's charter, *De Decima Retis*, the witnesses are thus mentioned; *Hugone Ep̄o Sti Andree, Bricio Priore Keledeorum de Brech., W. Archid. Sti Andree, et Matussale Decano, Andrea Capellano, et Matheo Sacrista eccl̄e de Brechyn, et insuper Gillebryd Comite de Angus, et Dovenald Abbe de Brech.* ⁵ According to the construction, this Matussal was at this time Dean, while Matthew, afterwards advanced to this dignity, was only Sacrist. This must have been before the year 1187;

¹ Pref. to Keith's Catalogue, xi. The two charters of this description, given by Goodall, will be found in the Appendix, No. IX.

² Regist. Aberbroth. i. Fol. 97. Macfarl. i. p. 229. It is numbered as Chart. 189.

³ Ibid. No. 185, p. 226.

⁴ Ibid. No. 178.

⁵ Ibid. Fol. 98. Macfarl. MS. p. 232. No. 193.

for in this year Hugh, Bishop of St Andrews, died. Here, and in several other instances, the Prior of the Culdees takes place of the Dean.

All that can fairly be inferred from the language of these deeds, is, that the bishops here were willing that the Culdees should retain their ancient right of election, in conjunction with others. For, even in both the charters given by Goodall, the Prior and Culdees, though introduced as having a seat in the chapter, are expressly distinguished from the rest of the members: *Prior, et Keledei, ceterique de Capitulo Brechynensis ecclesiae*. In several others, their prior is mentioned as peculiarly as if he had had no connexion with the chapter. The bishop, therefore, must have used the phrase, *Keledeorum nostrorum*, "our Culdees," not as if they had formally constituted his chapter, but because they were the Culdees residing within his diocese, and connected with this see.

Maitland has fallen into a series of blunders, when speaking of the abbey of Trinitarian or Mathurine monks here; which, he says, "probably, by its antiquity, owes its erection to King David I., who established the bishop's see in this place." His proof is; "For about the year 1178, Dovenal-

* Testibus Dño Bricio Episcopo Morav. Dn̄o Willō de Boscho Cancellar. Mallebryd Priore Keledeorum nostrorum. Magrō Henrico de Norham Officiali nostro. Freskyn Moravien. ecclie Decano. Magrō Henrico et Hugone de Duveglas Clericis Dni Moravien. Magrō Henrico de Monros et Willō Capellanis nostris et toto Capitulo nostro. Regist. Aberbroth. i. Fol. 96. No. 187.

dus, *Abbot* of Brechin, granted to the Abbot of Aberbrothocke, Terram de Ballege le Grand, which King Alexander confirmed by charter; and, anno 1219, I find one John to have been Abbot of Brechin." ¹ There could be no Mathurines or Red Friars at Brechin A. 1178; for this order was instituted during the papacy of Innocent III., who was not elected till the year 1198. This *Dovenald*, of whom he speaks, was evidently a layman. His name occurs in several charters. In that to which Maitland must have referred, the land is denominated *Balegille grand*, and the donor, *Douenaldus Abbe de Brechyn*. ² In the charter of confirmation, immediately following, the name is *Douenaldus Abb*. There can be no doubt that Abb or Abbe was his surname. We have seen him conjoined, in a preceding extract, with the Earl of Angus; and they are evidently distinguished from the clergy mentioned before. In the charter immediately preceding that concerning *Balegille grand*, Morgund Abbe confirms the gift of fewel from his forest, which his father John Abbe had made to the abbey of Arbroath; which confirmation his father, and his paternal uncle, and his brother John, attest. The father of John had been Malis, who was proprietor of the forest of *Edale*, most probably what is now written *Edzel*, the name of a parish not far from Brechin, whence one of the principal branches of the family of Lindsay took its title. This appears from a charter of confirmation by King Wil-

¹ History of Scotland, i. 251.

² Regist. Aberbroth. i. Fol. 60. Macfarl. i. p. 145.

liam, in which the donor is designed Johannes *Abbas* filius Malisii. ¹ This is probably the origin of the surname of *Abbot*, which still exists in Angus.

The names of two Culdees are recorded in a charter granted by Turpin, in which he gives some lands in the village of Strucatherach, i. e. Strickathrow. Besides Brice Prior of Brechin, mention is made of Gillesali *Kelde*, and Machalen *Kelde*. ²

Concerning the foundation at *Dunblane*, I scarcely need any other testimony than that of Keith, who was so zealous for the rights of episcopacy. “Formerly,” he says, “there was a convent of Culdees here, and continued so to be, *even after* the erection of the bishopric, which owes its foundation to king David II. towards the end of his reign. St Blaen was superior of this convent in the time of King Kenneth III. and from him the see derived its name, [*Britan. Sancta.*” ³]

Here there is undoubtedly a mistake. Keith must have meant to speak of David I., who erected Dunblane into a bishopric. ⁴ Mr Chalmers says, that “St Blaen was the patron, as he was the chief of this religious establishment” of Culdees; “being a bishop, here, about 1000, A. D.” ⁵ He refers to Keith’s Catalogue, p. 100. But Keith has not mentioned St Blaen as a bishop, and still less as bishop of Dun-

¹ Regist. Aberbroth. i. Fol. 60. No. 72. 73.

² *Ibid.* Fol. 61. ap. Macfarl. p. 146.

³ Catalogue of Bishops, p. 100.

⁴ V. Buchanan. Hist. Lib. vii. c. 27. Dalrymple’s Collect. p. 247.

⁵ Caledonia, i. p. 430, Note (z.)

blane. He could not, indeed, consistently do so ; as he says, that St Blaen lived in the reign of Kenneth III. ; whereas the bishopric owed its foundation to David I., who did not begin to reign till the year 1124. In the Aberdeen Breviary, he is said to have been consecrated to the episcopal office ; but no mention is made of Dunblane, nor of any other place of residence. ¹ Camerarius makes him bishop of Sodor ; adding, that the city of *Dunblane* in Scotland received its name from him. ² Lesley also speaks of him as a bishop ; but takes no notice of his see. ³

It has been supposed, that there was also a Culdee establishment at *Muthil*. “ We find,” says Crawford, “ the Abbots and Priors of the Culdees at Brechin, Muthill, Dunkeld, and Abernethy, all frequently witnesses to the deeds or grants of the bishops : and getting churches or tithes from them, together with the *Curæ Animarum*.” On the supposition that such an establishment subsisted at Muthil, perhaps it could only be viewed as a cell belonging to the monastery of Dunblane. Goodall observes, that Michael, parson of Muthil, and Macbeath his chaplain, are conjunct witnesses with Malpol, whom he seems to view as Prior of the Culdees at Dunblane. They attest a confirmation, by William Bishop of Dunblane, of the “ gift of the church of Kin-cardine, to the monks of Cambuskenneth, to be seen in their charter, fol. 80.” ⁴ But from the inscription of a charter, quoted by Crawford, Malpol appears as “ Prior of the Cul-

¹ In August. Fol. lxxvii.

³ Hist. p. 189.

² De Pietate Scotor. p. 167.

⁴ Pref. to Keith's Catalogue, x.

dees of Muthil." *Carta Simonis Episcopi Dunblanen. Monialibus de North-Berwick, Ecclesiae de Logy-Athry. Testibus, Malpol Prior Keledeiorum de Methyl, et Michael, et Malcolmo, Keledeis de Methyl.* ¹ The quotation is certainly inaccurate. The charter, he says, is in the Earl of Marchmont's family archives. But I have no opportunity to examine it. On looking, however, into the charter referred to by Goodall, I find the witnesses thus designed; *Archidiacono Ionatha capellano meo*, that is, chaplain to W. Bishop of Dunblane; *Cormac Malpol, priore Keldeorum persona de Mothell, Michael et eius capellano Mackbeth, &c.* ² As Crawford has given such Latin as even monks would not have written, I strongly suspect that, in the Marchmont charter, Malpol must be designed as here; and that Crawford has left out the word *persona* between *Keledeiorum*, and, according to his orthography, *de Methyl*. If so, the only proof, as far as I have observed, of a Culdee establishment at Muthil, falls to the ground.

This charter was granted towards the close of the twelfth century. Before the Reformation, Muthil was the residence of the Dean of Dunblane. ³

The power of the Culdees was also considerable in that diocese, of which the see was originally at Mortlach, but afterwards, in the reign of David I., translated to Aberdeen. For, notwithstanding the great additions made to this episcopate on occasion of the change of its seat, bishop Nectan

¹ Officers of State, p. 6, N.

² Cartul. Cambuskenneth, ut sup. cit.

³ Statist. Acc. viii. 485.

did not prevail in his attempts to expel the Culdees. They still continued, at least at *Monimusk*. We learn, from the Chartulary of Aberdeen, that “ Edward, successor to Nectan, was the *first* bishop who instituted canons at Aberdeen, by the authority of the apostolic seat.”¹ Hence Sir James Dalrymple concludes, “ that no sort of churchmen, but the Culdees, can be supposed to be established there before that time : nor,” he says, “ needed churchmen to be expelled by papal authority, to make way for the Chanoinis, if they had been of the Romish institution. It is certain,” he adds, “ that the Culdees were at Monymusk, in the diocese of Aberdeen, which afterwards became a popish priorie.”²

Malcolm II., A. 1010, having defeated the Danes at Mortlach, soon after founded a religious establishment there, in token of gratitude for his victory. Some of our writers call this a bishopric ; others view it as only a religious house, which became the residence of a bishop. Sir James Dalrymple has given the deed of foundation from the Chartulary of Aberdeen.³ But by some writers this deed is considered as a monkish forgery. I shall give it, in a note, as extracted from the Chartulary itself ;⁴ where it appears with some slight variations as to orthography.

¹ Primus Episcopus ibidem residens vocabatur Nectanus. Secundus Edwardus, qui primo Canonicos instituit in dicta ecclia sedis apostolice auctoritate. Fol. 47.

² Collections, p. 281.

³ Ibid. p. 135.

⁴ Malcolmus Rex Scotorum omnibus probis hominibus suis, tam clericis quam laicis, salutem : Sciatis me dedisse, et hac charta mea confirmasse, Deo

How soon after the foundation at Mortlach, the Culdees were settled at Monimusk, we cannot pretend to determine. It is certain, however, that they were here about a century after, during the episcopate of Robert of St Andrews. Their most liberal donor was undoubtedly Gilchrist Earl of Mar, who lived during the reign of William the Lion. His donations will be more particularly mentioned, when we come to consider the suppression of this order: and his charter will be found in the Appendix, extracted from the register of St Andrews. †

The same lands were afterwards confirmed to them by another Earl of Mar, of the name of Duncan. It is evident that he was later than Gilchrist. For he assigns, as one reason of the donation, his desire of the prosperity of his lord

et Beate Marie et omnibus sanctis, et episcopo Beyn de Morthelach, ecclesiam de Morthelach, ut ibidem construatur sedes episcopalis, cum terris meis de Morthelach, ecclesiam de Cloveth cum terra, ecclesiam de Dulmeth cum terra, ita libere sicut eas tenui, et in puram et perpetuam elemosinam. Teste meipso apud Forfare octavo die mensis Octobris, anno regni meo sexto. Registr. Aberdon. Fol. 47.

It does not seem to have been observed by our ecclesiastical writers, that this Cloveth, in Mar, is counted among our monastic establishments. Pope Adrian, in a bull of confirmation granted by him to Edward, who was bishop of Aberdeen in the reign of David I., speaks of both Cloveth and Mortlach as monasteries.—*Monasterium de Cloveth, villam et Monasterium de Murthlach, cum quinque ecclesiis et terris eisdem pertinentibus.* This seems strongly to confirm the idea that Mortlach had at first been only a religious house. Boece says, that this Edward was the first who instituted canons regular in the church of Aberdeen. *Eduardus vero primus omnium regularis vitæ viros (quos vocavit Canonicos) veluti confratres ad diuina cum sacellanis exequenda primus omnium in Aberdonen. ecclesia instituit.* Aberdon. Episc. Vit. Fol. 3. b.

† V. No. X.

King Alexander. ¹ This was the second of the name, the son of William, who is referred to as deceased : for he speaks of his granting this donation “ for the *soul* of his lord King William.” But Gilchrist, in his charter, expresses his wish “ for the safety and prosperity of his lord King William, and of all who are dear to him.” This Duncan designs himself the son of Morgrund ; and there is a codicil to this deed by William Earl of Mar, the son of Duncan, and of course the grandson of Morgrund, addressed to Peter, who was bishop of Aberdeen from the year 1247 to 1256. This Morgrund seems to have been the son of Gilchrist. He is undoubtedly the same person to whom William the Lion granted the renewal of the investiture of the earldom of Mar. This curious deed is given by Selden, from a charter in his possession. It is dated, A. 1171, at *Hindhop Burnemuthae*, apparently some place in the south of Scotland. ² Morgund, as the name is here given, is called the son of *Gillocherus*. There can be no reason to doubt that this is the same person ; and that the name had been written in this manner by some southern scribe, to whom that of *Gilchrist* was not familiar, and written by the ear ; or that, in the original deed, there may be that abbreviation on the latter part of the name which is common in ancient manuscripts.

The first deed of confirmation, by John bishop of Aberdeen, is indeed said to be granted *ad presentationem et peti-*

¹ V. Appendix, No. XI.

² V. Titles of Honour ; also, Sutherland Case, p. 35, 36.

tionem Gilchrist Comitit. ¹ Now, John was not elected till the year 1200, that is twenty-nine years after Morgrund succeeded to Gilchrist. But it would seem, that the language merely refers to the presentation, by his son Morgrund, of the deed of donation formerly made by Gilchrist; or perhaps the episcopal confirmation had still been withheld on account of some demur.

The donation of Duncan is confirmed by a charter issued by Alexander II. ² Duncan also gave them the lands of Kindrouth, formerly a parish by itself, but now annexed to Crathy; of Achatandregan, and of Alien, apparently Ellon. This donation is confirmed by the deed of Gilbert, who was chosen bishop of Aberdeen A. 1228, and died A. 1238. ³

Nor were the Earls of Mar the only benefactors to the Culdees at Monimusk. Colin, designed *Hostiarius*, or *Durward*, ⁴ confirms to them the possession of the lands of Lorthel, or rather Lochel. This is repeated by Philip de Monte. ⁵ Thomas, whose designation is given more fully, as he is called *Hostiarius Regis*, gave them the church of Afford, or Alford, with all its pertinents, and certain duties from Feodarg, and some other places specified. ⁶ Roger, Earl of Buchan, gave them annually certain duties out of the lands of Feodarg, after the example of his grandfather Gartnach. ⁷ Al-

¹ V. Appendix, No. XII.

² V. Appendix, No. XIII.

³ V. Appendix, No. XIV.

⁴ V. Fordun, lib. x. c. 9. Dalrymple's Annals of Scotland, i. 164.

⁵ V. Appendix, No. XV.

⁶ V. Appendix, No. XVI.

⁷ V. Appendix No. XVII.

though in some of these deeds the name of Culdees does not appear, but only that of Canons ; we certainly know that the Culdees still continued there. For they are expressly mentioned under this name by William, who was elected bishop of Aberdeen A. 1345, and died A. 1351. ¹ In the charters of Thomas Hostiarius, and Roger Earl of Buchan, they are designated by their ancient name. It might appear indeed, that both Culdees and Canons Regular had for a long time held distinct establishments at Monimusk. For Pope Innocent IV., who came to the pontifical chair A. 1242, ² grants confirmations of the lands given to the prior and convent of Monimusk, designing them, *Ordinis Sancti Augustini*. ³ Yet John, elected to the bishopric of Aberdeen A. 1351, in his deed of confirmation of the charter of Gilchrist, expressly mentions the Culdees, as living at Monimusk. ⁴ I am inclined, however, to think, that there is either a mistake in the language of the papal bull; or, that the pope did not wish formally to recognise a society which did not claim his patronage.

They had also an establishment at *Portmoak*, in the vicinity of Lochlevin. A religious house was founded here, some time in the ninth century, by Eogasch, king of the Picts, as Spotiswood denominates him, ⁵ that is, Hungus, most probably the second of his name. This writer says, that it was consecrated to the Virgin Mary. But this may have been a secondary consecration in a later age.

¹ V. Appendix, No. XVIII. ² Walch's History of the Popes, p. 179.

³ V. Registr. Sti. Andr. p. 440. ⁴ Ibid. p. 442.

⁵ Account, p. 417. or Keith's Catalogue, p. 237.

There was a similar foundation at *Dunfermline*. Of this the following account has been given by a writer of great research: "The splendid abbey of Dunfermlin owed its inconsiderable foundation to Malcolm Ceanmore; its completion to Alexander I.; and its reform to David I. The monastery of Dunfermlin was dedicated, like the other Culdean establishments, to the Holy Trinity. Here, the Culdees, with their abbot, discharged their usual duties, during several reigns; and David I., who lived much with Henry I. of England, upon his accession, introduced, among the Celtic Culdees, thirteen English monks from Canterbury."¹ Spotswood mentions that this place "was formerly governed by a prior: for Eadmerus, speaking of the messengers that were sent by — King Alexander [I.] in the year 1120, to Radulph Archbishop of Canterbury, for procuring Eadmer to be bishop of St Andrews, says, *Horum unus quidem monachus, et Prior ecclesiae Dunfermelinae, Petrus nomine.*"² He conjectures that "it was then an hospital;" especially as it is designed, in some old manuscripts, *Monasterium de monte infirmorum*. "But it is evident, that this is merely a monkish play upon the name of the place; like *Mons rosarum* for Montrose, properly *Munross*. As Gaelic *Dun* denotes a hill, and *fiar* crooked; it might afford a tolerable foundation for monkish ingenuity. The fact seems to be, that it continued as a priory, till the time of David I., who, A. 1124, raised it to the dignity of an abbey. He wished perhaps, by giving

¹ Caledonia, i. p. 438.

² Account, p. 436.

greater honour to the place, to reconcile the Culdees to the introduction of his English monks.

It has been supposed, with great appearance of reason, “that when the fatal stone was transferred by Kenneth, the son of Alpin, from Argyle to *Scone*, a religious house would be established at this ancient metropolis:” and asserted, on certain grounds, that “a Culdean church was here dedicated, in the earliest times, to the Holy Trinity, like other Culdean establishments.”¹ There can be no doubt, that there was such an establishment before the reign of Alexander I. For in a charter of his, A. 1115, by which its form was changed, it is described as “a church dedicated in honour of the Holy Trinity.” And in the Chronicle of Mailros, under this year, it is said; “The church of *Scone* is delivered up to Canons.”

“Some have conjectured,” as we learn from Martine, “that there was a company and colledge of” Culdees “at *Kirkcaldie*, which, they say, was, and should be, called *Kirk-culdee*, and that the old name was *Cella Culdeorum*.”² It has been also said, that the place was named *Kil-celedie*, which was changed, during the Scoto-Saxon period, to *Kirkcaledie*.³

Brudi, son of Derili, King of the Picts, according to Wynthown, about the year 700, “founded a religious house at *Culross*.”⁴ Several circumstances induce us to view this as a

¹ Caledonia, i. 438.

² Reliquiae, p. 23.

³ Caledonia, i. p. 439.

⁴ V. Pinkerton's Enquiry, i. 257, 302, 303. The name of this place was anciently *Culewross*. Fordun. Scotichron. Lib. ix. c. 31. Also, *Kilinros*: Fundata est Abbatia de *Kilinros* a Domino Malcolmo Comite de Fif. Chron. Mailr. A. 1216. p. 193, 194. It was written *Cullinross* even after the reformation. V. Scotia Sacra, p. 282.

Culdean establishment. It is natural to think, that it would be similar to that which, as we have already seen, the same prince founded at Lochleven. It was to this place that St Serf retired ; and here he resided for many years ; as we learn from Wyntown :

And oure the wattyr, of purpos,
Of Forth he passyd til Culros :
Thare he begowth to red a grownd,
Quhare that he thowcht a kyrk to found.

From Culross he passed to Lochleven, where he remained for several years. He afterwards returned to Culross, where

He yhald wyth gud devotyowne
Hys cors til halowed sepulture,
And hys saule til the Creature.
Cronykil, B. V. ch. 12. ver. 1178. 1333.

As we have had occasion to take notice of the religious association between him and Adomnan, it is most probable that he conformed to the Columban rule here, as well as at Lochleven ; and that the church, erected at Culross, which bore his name, was on the same establishment.

It may be observed, however, that the Breviary of Aberdeen takes notice of two saints of this name ; the one a Scotsman, contemporary with Palladius, who made him a bishop ; the other, a foreigner, who was distinguished by many miracles, in the time of Abbot Adomnan. The latter is said to

have resided in the island *Petmook*.¹ This is undoubtedly meant for *Portmoak*, which, from its vicinity, has in various instances been confounded with the island of Lochleven, called St Serf's Isle, where he in fact resided, and which was afterwards dedicated to him.

It has not generally been observed, that *Mairos* has a claim to be reckoned one of the ancient seats of the Culdees, the most ancient indeed on the main land. "The name," we are told, "is supposed to be Gaelic, compounded of *Mull* and *Ross*, 'a bare promontory,' remarkably descriptive of a little peninsula about a mile to the east" of the modern village "formed by the windings of Tweed, which is still called *Old Melrose*, and famous for its ancient monastery, one of the first seats of the religious Culdees in this country." It is afterwards subjoined; "The monastery of Old Melrose was probably founded about the end of the sixth century. Bede gives us an account of its situation on the bank of the Tweed, and likewise of its abbots. This place was a famous nursery for learned and religious men, and probably continued till the other one at the present Melrose was founded by King David."²

"Old Melros," says a lively and celebrated tourist, "is now reduced to a single house, on a lofty promontory, peninsulated by the Tweed: a most beautiful scene; the banks

¹ Est et alius sanctus Servanus natione Irskanticus (*sic*) qui temporibus beati Adampnani abbatis in insula Petmook multis miraculis claruit.—In Julio, Fol. xvi, a. b.

² Statist. Acc. ix. 77. 88.

lofty, and wooded, varied with perpendicular rocks, jutting like buttresses from top to bottom. This was the site of the antient abbey of Culdees, mentioned by Bede to have existed in 664, in the reign of the Saxon Oswy. This place was as celebrated for the austerities of Driethelmus, as ever Finchal was for those of St Godric. The first was restored to life after being dead an entire night. During that space, he passed through purgatory and hell, had the beatific vision, and got very near to the confines of heaven. His angelic guide gave him an useful lesson on the efficacy of prayer, alms, fasting, and particularly, masses of holy men; infallible means to relieve the souls of friends and relations from the place of torment.”¹

The account given above of the establishment of Culdees at Mailros, corresponds with the general tradition of the country. It is also supported by the character of the person, to whom the foundation of this religious house has been with great probability ascribed. This is the celebrated Aidan.² Bede, indeed, has not expressly said, that it was founded by him. But, speaking of Eata, under the year 664, he says, that he “was abbot of the monastery which is called Mailros.” This Eata, he adds, “was one of the twelve young disciples of Aidan, of the nation of the Angles, whom he received, when he entered on his episcopate, to be instructed

¹ Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, 1772. P. ii. 268. He refers to Bed. *Hist. lib.* v. c. 12.

² *V. Caledonia*, 1. 325; and Milne's *Description of Melrose*, p. 5.

in Christ.”¹ Now, from the general tenor of his history, it appears, that, before the mission of Aidan, there were no monasteries in that quarter. Eata was succeeded by Boisil, “a priest,” says Bede, “distinguished for his virtues, and of a prophetic spirit.” Upon his death, the celebrated St Cuthbert was made abbot.² After living many years at Mailros, he was made bishop of Lindisfarne. Aedilwald was abbot, A. 696. He was afterwards bishop of Lindisfarne; and was one of Bede’s contemporaries.³ In the Chronicle of Mailros, he is denominated Ethelwald.⁴

Aidan himself, we certainly know, was a Culdee; and hence we might conclude, that he would prefer this establishment to every other. But the language of Bede incidentally affords a clear proof that he did so. When we read of the “twelve disciples of Aidan,” or “young men” committed to his charge, no doubt can remain, that he meant to instruct them according to the rule of Iona; as he adhered to the very number which had the sanction of Columba, himself representing the abbot as their head.

“This place,” says Milne, “was a famous nursery for learned and religious men, who were filled with zeal for propagating the Christian religion, particularly among their neighbours the Pagan Saxons.

“This convent,” he subjoins, “has been inclosed with a

¹ *Esset idem Eata unus de duodecim pueris Aidani, quos primo episcopatus sui tempore de natione Anglorum erudiendos in Christo accepit.* Hist. lib. iii. c. 26.

² Hist. lib. iv. c. 27.

Hist. lib. V. c. 12.

⁴ P. 135.

stone wall, reaching from the south corner of the Tweed to the west corner of it, where the neck of land is narrow; the foundations of the wall are still to be seen. At the entrance to the convent, about the middle of this wall, there has been an house, built likely for the porters, called yet the *Red-house*. The place where the chapel stood, is still called the *Chapel-know*, and places on Tweed at this place still retain their names from the monks there, as the *Haly-wheel*, [i. e. holy-whirlpool, or eddy] and the *Monk-ford*. I do not think there has been any great building about it; for, as Bede acquaints us, their churches then were all of oak, and thatched with reeds.”¹

Speaking of Colmsly, he says; “There has been a chapel here, the ruins of which are yet to be seen: It has been dedicated to Columba, abbot of Hii, from whence the place seems to take its name, as it is likewise called *Cellmuir*, from the chapel in the muir.”²

“Nennius,” he elsewhere remarks,³ “a British historian, who lived, as some, in the year 620, or rather, as the Bishop of Carlisle places him,⁴ anno 853,—speaks of the noble and great monastery of Melrose, cap. 63, which was ruined likely then after the destruction of the churches and monasteries by the Pagan Danes, who burnt the churches and houses wherever they came.” But although Milne here quotes Sir James Dalrymple’s Collections, he takes no notice of what the author has justly observed, that the passage referred to

¹ Description of Melrose, p. 6.

² Ibid. p. 65, 66.

³ Ibid. p. 5.

⁴ Eng. Histor. Fol. Lib. p. 33

in Nennius is “ a manifest interpolation.” This he proves, from its being said that “ Wedale is a village *now* subject to the Bishop of St Andrews ;” whereas there was no bishop of this designation when Nennius wrote. ¹

In this interpolated passage, it is pretended, that Arthur obtained a signal victory over the Pagans of this district, by means of a cross consecrated at Jerusalem. “ The fragments of this cross,” it is said, “ are still held in great veneration at Wedale.”—*Cujus fractae adhuc apud Wedale in magna veneratione servatur. Wedale, Anglice: Vallis doloris, Latine: Wedale est villa in Provincia Lodonesic, nunc vero juris episcopi sancti Andreae Scotiae, VI. miliaria ab occidentali parte, ab illo quondam nobili et eximio Monasterio de Meilros.* Gale, vol. i. 114.

Sir James conjectures, that “ this interpolation has been made before the last erection of the abbacie of Melross, and after the time of William the Conqueror, and Malcolm the Third.” When *Wedale* is spoken of as a village, that of *Stow* is undoubtedly referred to ; for Milne uses both terms as applied to the same place, p. 65. But *Wedale*, in its larger signification, has been applied to the valley itself. *Stow*, according to the sense of the word in Anglo-Saxon, might signify, *the place*, or village, of Wedale. Different places in England are thus denominated ; and the term enters into the composition of the names of others, as Walthamstow, &c.

¹ Collections, p. 57.

“The monastery of Melrose,” Mr Pinkerton says, “was apparently ruined by the Danes about the year 800, if not by Kenneth III. about 850. Chron. Pict. It remained in ruins, till refounded by David I. 1136.”¹ The latter part of this account receives confirmation from the silence of the Chronicle of Mailros, as to any abbots, or even monks, belonging to this monastery, during the period referred to: and still more, from the express language of Simeon of Durham. He relates, that Aldwin, Turgot, and some others, leaving the monastery of Girwy, “came to what was formerly the monastery of Mailros, *but then a solitude*; and being delighted with the retirement of that place, began to serve Christ there. But when Malcolm, King of Scots, to whom this place belonged, was informed that they had taken up their residence there, he subjected them to great injuries and persecutions, because, observing the rule of the gospel, they would not swear fealty to him. In the mean time the venerable bishop Walcher, by letters and precepts, desired, admonished, and adjured them” to return to Girwy, having threatened to excommunicate them, “in the presence of the most sacred body of St Cuthbert, if they did not return to live under this saint.” They at length obeyed; “being more afraid of excommunication, than of the wrath of the king, which threatened them with death.”²

¹ Enquiry, ii. 268 N.

² Igitur ad Mailrosense quondam Monasterium, tunc autem solitudinem, pervenientes, secreta illius loci habitatione delectati, Christo ibidem servientes, coeperunt conversari. &c. Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Col. 45.

From the Chronicle of Mailros, it appears that this Walcher, who was bishop of Durham, was killed A. 1080, that is, fifty-six years before the foundation of the new monastery.