

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Suppression of the Culdees.—Means employed for this Purpose.—Their Promotion to Bishoprics.—Increase of Episcopal Sees.—Preference given to Foreigners.—Introduction of Canons Regular ;—at St Andrews ;—Lochlevin ;—Dunkeld ;—Brechin.—Convention between Bishop Malvoisin and the Culdees of Monimusk.—Remarks on it.

VARIOUS were the means employed for suppressing the Culdees, who were viewed with so jealous an eye by the votaries of the papal chair, and who had all along presented so powerful a barrier to its influence. This was first attempted in an artful manner. “ It is observable,” says Sir James Dalrymple, “ that the Romish church did advance very warily, and by slow steps, endeavouring to gain the Culdean abbots to their partie, by promoting them to bishopricks to be erected, and by preserving to the Culdees (possessed of parochial churches) their benefices for their life time, and making the

suppression of these churches in favours of the new-erected *Romish* abbaies, only to take place after the incumbents death : and frequently these concessions bear the consent of the presbyter or churchman incumbent, with the reservation of his own right during life time.”¹

In the passage quoted, as well as in p. 286, Sir James gives several proofs of the annexation of parish churches, formerly occupied by Culdee presbyters, to the newly-erected abbies.

The learned Dr Ledwich gives a similar account. “ It was not easy to eradicate a reverence founded on solid piety, exemplary charity, and superior learning ; or to commit sudden violence on characters where such qualities were found. The Romish emissaries were therefore obliged to exert all their cunning to remove those favourable prejudices, and where force could not, seduction often prevailed. The alternative of expulsion or acquiescence must ever strongly operate on human imbecility : in a few instances the latter was chosen : thus, about the year 1127, Gregory, Abbot of the Culdean monastery of Dunkeld, and Andrew his successor, were made bishops, the first of Dunkeld, the other of Caithness.—The same policy was followed in Ireland. The president of the Culdees was made præcentor ; he was to have the most honourable seat at table, and every respect from his corps. Such little distinctions, while they flattered and saved appearances, were fatal to the Culdees ; many

¹ Collections, p. 248.

breaches were made in their rights, and at last, they lost all their privileges, their old institute, and retained barely the name of their pristine celebrity." ¹

An *increase* of the number of the *episcopal sees* seems, indeed, to have been one of the measures adopted for the overthrow of the Culdean influence. The idea may excite a smile from those who affect to speak contemptuously of this religious body. But there can be no doubt, that their influence, among the lower classes especially, had been great. How much soever the testimony of Boece may be despised, when he pretends to narrate the history of a very early period; he certainly deserves attention, when speaking of things almost within his own observation. "The name," he says, "acquired such a degree of authority among the vulgar, that all priests, almost to our own times, were commonly designed, without distinction, *Culdees*, that is, worshippers of God." ² David I., who seems to have been determined to depress this order, and who pursued a variety of measures which had this tendency, added at least four bishoprics to those which had been erected before his time; and it is by no means improbable, that this was one thing that he had in view in extending the power of the prelacy. ³

In connexion with this, I may add, that the description

¹ Antiq. of Irel. p. 113. V. also Keith's Cat. p. 46.

² Invaluit id nomen apud vulgus intantum, ut sacerdotes omnes, ad nostra pœne tempora, vulgo *Culdei*, i. cultores Dei, sine discrimine vocitarentur. Hist. Fol. 95. b.

³ V. Dalrymple's Collections, p. 245, 246.

of the prelates invested, from this time forward, strongly corroborates what has been said. Sir James Dalrymple has made some observations on this head, which I shall give in his own words. "Other methods perhaps were taken to subvert the antient, and to introduce the Romish religion into this kingdom, viz. that used in England, to make the Saxons depend intirely upon Rome for their conversion, and to hinder conformity with the British Scots or Picts; that first their bishops were chosen forreigners, at least of forreign education. It is observed in Chr. Sax., that from Austine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, there was no Saxon admitted to be archbishop there, till Brightwaldus anno 690; and just so the Norman kings of England would not admit of the Saxons to be bishops there, till the reign of Henry the Second. Our Scots kings Alexander and David have followed this patern, in choising Turgot, Eadmer, and Robert (instructed in the Romish religion in England) to be Bishops at St Andrews. John Bishop of Glasgow also appears to be a forreigner, and probably educat at Tours in France, whence he brought monks to Selkirk, and where he retired when he was dissatisfied with the manners of the Scots. It is said that he was consecrate by Pope Paschasius. It is plain that Robert, the first prior of St Andrews, was bred in England with the prior of St Oswald's," &c. †

But the great plan devised for the overthrow of the Culdees, was the introduction of *Canons Regular*. These had

† Collections, p. 284, 286.

been erected into a permanent order in the eleventh century. Being patronised by the pope, they were devoted to the interests of the church of Rome, and zealous for the extension of the authority of their ghostly father. They acquired credit with the superstitious, as having more appearance of sanctity than the Culdee Presbyters; especially as they lived in celibacy, while the honest Culdees laid no claim to the gift of continence. They affected far greater pomp in their worship. No sooner were these canons introduced at St Andrews, than matters assumed an appearance of what was deemed *religion* in those days, which had been quite unknown before. Their prior at St Andrews “wore, in all public meetings, and in solemn services upon festival days, the pontifical ornaments, viz. a mitre, gloves, ring, cross, crosier, and sandals or slippers, as the bishops; and in parliament had the precedence of all abbots and priors.”¹ The very design of their introduction into those places, where the Culdees had formerly had the power, was the establishment of this species of religion;—ut in dicta ecclesia religio *constitueretur*.²

Wyntown, when speaking of the zeal of David I. commonly called *the Saint*, in furthering the injunctions of his brother Alexander as to the establishment of those canons, gives such an account of the aspect of matters before, as if the country, because of the more simple forms of worship, had been absolutely in a state of heathenism.

¹ Keith's Catalogue, p. 237.

² Excerpt. ex Registro Prior. Sti. Andr. Dalr. Coll. p. 262.

All thus illumynyd he thys land
 Wyth kyrkis and abbays rycht plesand,
 And othir stedis of renowne,
 Seculare, and of religyowne,
 That, or Malcolme hys fadyre
 Had weddyd Saynt Margret his modyr,
Ræyd and *sympil all tyme* wes,
 Bot lyk a bynd wild hethyns.

*Cronykil, B. vii. c. 6. v. 125. **

In some instances, where canons regular were introduced, the Culdees were tolerated, if they would consent to live according to the canonical rule. This was the case at Lochlevin. St Serf's Isle, which formerly belonged to the Culdees, was annexed to the priory of St Andrews, to the end that a monastery of canons regular might be instituted there, with this reservation ; *Et Keledei, qui ibidem inventi fuerint, si regulariter vivere volueri[n]t, in pace cum eis, et sub eis, maneannt.* Thus they were subjected to the canons. And it is expressly required, in addition, that if they made resistance, they were to be expelled from the island. ²

It has been supposed, that the Culdees were expelled from Dunkeld as early as the year 1127, when David I. made Gregory, who had been abbot of their monastery, bishop of this sec. ³ David—mutato Monasterio, in ecclesiam cathe-

* That is ; " The form of worship, before the marriage of Malcolm to Saint Margaret, had still been so rude and simple, that the country seemed to be as ignorant and wild as if it had been actually in a state of heathenism."

² Chart. David. I. ap. Keith's Cat. p. 7.

³ Keith's Cat. p. 46.

dralem crexit; et *repudiatis Kelledeis*, episcopum et *canonicos* instituit, secularemque collegium in futurum esse ordinavit. ¹

But Dalrymple concludes, with apparent reason, that they continued there for some time after the erection of the bishopric; and that, "although the chanoins might get into the cathedral, yet the Culdees did retain their other possessions." In support of this opinion, he refers to what he calls the large charter of David I. to the abbey of Dunfermline, which contains an exception with respect to the rights pertaining to the abbey of Dunkeld; *Exceptis rectitudinibus quae ad Abbatiam de Dunkelden pertinent.* ²

We have formerly spoken of the change of the religious foundation at Abernethy. The precise time of their suppression at Brechin cannot easily be determined. There is extant a charter of William the Lion, confirming one of David I. This is addressed to the bishops and Culdees of Brechin; *Episcopis et Kelleis in Ecclesia de Breichen.* But it appears that they had been superseded, or at least, that canons had been introduced into the chapter instead of them, before the time of Robert Bruce, or soon after he came to the throne. For a charter, granted by Robert, in the second year of his reign, is addressed, *Episcopo et Canonicis de Breichen.* ³

William Malvoisin, Bishop of St Andrews, was a keen adversary of the Culdees. This enmity might perhaps be owing to his being educated abroad; if he was not, as some assert, a native of France. ⁴ He had most probably resolved to

¹ Myln, MS. Vit. Episc. Dunkeld. Fol. 3.

² Collections, p. 247.

³ Dalrymple's Collections, p. 249.

⁴ Keith's Catalogue, p. 10.

attempt the total extinction of this respectable society. But before he would begin his great attack at St Andrews, he seems to have deemed it most prudent to try his power at Monimusk, which was within the bishopric of Aberdeen, and subject to Malvoisin as metropolitan. He might be induced to adopt this plan of procedure, partly from the remoteness of the place, as being situated in the wilds of Mar. Here he might have a more flattering prospect of success, in endeavouring to crush the power of the Culdees, than in a more populous country, where their influence was greater. Besides, if he failed here, his disgrace would be less, than if he had been defeated in the very seat of his power. He might also have a more plausible pretence for attempting their reduction here; because the seat of the bishopric having been changed, the Culdees might seem to have less ground for maintaining their claim to elect the bishop. But, in all probability, his most powerful excitement was, that, whereas the Culdees had been gradually declining in most of their monasteries, here they had received an accession of strength, as to both numbers and wealth, in consequence of the liberal donations of some of our nobles.

Notwithstanding the comparative obscurity of the place, this part of their history is of considerable importance. For it affords a striking display of the difficulties, which their adversaries met with, in their warfare against them. It has also been grossly misrepresented, and generally misunderstood. It is, therefore, necessary to examine it with more attention than it might otherwise seem to claim.

Sir James Dalrymple quotes an ancient writing, entitled, *Conventio inter Dominum Willielmum Episcopum Sancti Andree et Keldeos de Mouynusk*; in which it is conceded, he says, “that they should live in communion after the manner of the Keldees,” and have one oratory, one refectory, and one dormitory, “as they presently possessed it;” the half carrucate of land being secured to them, which they had from the donation of Robert, of good memory, Bishop of St Andrews; their ancient alms being also secured, and the offerings which they, and their predecessors had, from the time of Bishop Robert to the present day: * “and that they submitted to the disposal of the B. [ishop]; and that there might be 12 Keldees there, and Britius the 13th, whom they were to present to the bishop, that he might be their *magister* or prior; and after his dimission or decease, the Keldees might choise three of their Con-keldees by common consent, and present them to the bishop or his successors, who was to choise one out of the three to be prior or *magister* in all time coming; and that they should not exceed the number formerly mentioned, nor substitute any person; and that they should resign, in favours of the bishop, the lands which they got from Gilchrist, Earl of Marr, and claime no right to them afterward, without the bishop’s consent; and that the bishop and his successors were obliged to help and maintain the Keldees as their own, with power to him to add dew clauses, until this

* The passages not in inverted commas are literally translated, where Sir James has given the Latin.

agreement was confirmed by the K[ing]'s authority: and *Magister Britius* and *Andreas* did swear to the agreement for themselves and the Culdees, and the seals of the parties and delegates were appended. In implement of this transaction, William Bishop of St Andrews, with consent of his archdeacon and chapter, granted to the Keldees a charter in the terms of the above agreement, with some additions; That the oratory should be without a cemetery, so that the bodies of the Keldees, and of the clergy, or of the laics dwelling with them, might receive ecclesiastical sepulture in the cemetery of the parochial church of Monymusk; "and that the prior was to swear fidelity to the bishop; the lands of Dulbechot and Fournathy, gifted by the Earl of Marr, were to be resigned to the bishop; and that, when the bishop came to reside at Monymusk, the Keldees should receive him with a solemn procession." *

Hence Sir James argues, that Bishop Robert, who was elected to this see A. 1122, "was not able to subdue the Culdees of Monymusk, but obliged to make an agreement with them;" and that his successor, Malvoisin, who died A. 1237, although he "encroached farther upon them," still left them some of their peeculiar privileges.

This deed of settlement was made, in consequence of a reference to the papal chair. Yet did the Bishop of St Andrews, "in opposition to a solemn promise, suppress those Culdees; and place canons regular, in their room, at Mony-

* Collections, p. 281, 282.

musk, which became thenceforth a cell of the priory of St Andrews.”¹

Goodall has made several remarks on the inferences deduced by Sir James Dalrymple from this deed. “The chartulary,” he observes, “has a notable piece of a sentence, which Sir James has not given us; for in the article about the election of a prior, when a vacancy happened, ‘the Culdees were to elect three of their fellow Culdees, by common consent, and present them to the bishop, or his successor, who was to make choice of one of the three at his will and pleasure, and that person was to swear fealty to the bishop’ [here Sir James stops, but the chartulary proceeds] as *Founder of the Culdees House*.”²

I have examined the chartulary, and find that it contains the words omitted by Sir James. If he withheld this clause, because he viewed it as tending to overthrow his hypothesis, undoubtedly it was not consistent with that candour which he has almost uniformly manifested. But, in making the quotation referred to, it does not appear that he transcribed from the chartulary itself, but from the MS. “Collection of Mr James Law of Bogis,” to which he refers. Whether the deed might not be so fully extracted in that collection, I cannot pretend to say.

At any rate, Sir James had no reason for apprehension from any thing contained in this deed. Nor had Goodall sufficient reason for adding; “So it is plain, the bishops founded the convents of Culdees, and the Culdees elected

¹ Caledonia, i. 438.

² Pref. to Keith's Catal. xiii.

the bishops, whenever they resided about the bishop's see ; although not at places like Monymusk, where there was no bishop."

The following remarks naturally occur from the tenor of this deed ; which, as it is of considerable importance in the question, I shall insert in the Appendix. ¹

1. An attempt had previously been made to change the form of the institution at Monimusk. It appears that, after the translation of the episcopal seat to Aberdeen, the bishops had wished to reduce the convent to a mere hospital ; and even to represent it as having never held any higher place. For the inscription of the deed, as it stands in the chartulary of Aberdeen, is ; *Commissio impetrata per Dominum Episcopum Sti Andree contra destruentes hospitalia, aut in aliam naturam convertentes, et specialiter ad reformand. hospitale sive Kildey de Monymuske, et processus super eodem.* It is perfectly clear, from the very strain of the inscription, that the innovating party wished to exhibit the Culdees, as men worthy to be classed with *the destroyers of hospitals*, because they attempted to *convert an hospital to another use* than that which, as they pretend, was originally designed by the founder. They had even framed a new word for their purpose ; a word, which, as far as I have observed, occurs no where else. This is *Kildey*, which they use as if it had been synonymous with *Hospitale*. This was "a commission—for reforming the *Hospital* or *Kildey* of Monimusk." We see in what sense the Bishop of St Andrews might design himself the "Founder of

¹ V. No. XIX.

the Culdees House," and pretend a right to require that the prior should do homage to him in this character. He might be called its *Founder*, in the same sense in which an usurper, who has destroyed an ancient city, blotted out its very name, and built a new one on its ruins, claims this title. He had exerted himself to the utmost, to change the nature of the institution, and had tried to make the very language of his country bend to his humour; as if it had been possible, by the mere witchery of a word, at once to deprive all his contemporaries of the power of recollection; or to persuade them, that what had existed for centuries as a monastery, had never been more than an hospital.

2. The limitation of their number, on this occasion, seems to imply that they had previously been more numerous. It is probable, indeed, that thirteen was the usual number in one house. But, unless they had exceeded this number here, or had different houses, we cannot easily conceive, why they should henceforth be restricted to *one* oratory, *one* refectory, and *one* dormitory. Why this limitation, if they had not formerly enjoyed greater privileges? As it is certain, that Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, built a new monastery for them, it would appear that they henceforth meant to occupy two houses at Monimusk.

3. We discern the reason of their being said to act as canons. Before the change of the seat of the episcopate, they, like the Culdees, in other places, had the sole power of electing the bishops. Since the translation of the see, canons regular had been instituted at Aberdeen, to whom their rights

were transferred. The Culdees of Monimusk, however, asserted their claim; and seem either to have presented themselves as electors at Aberdeen, or to have made an election of their own. For the first article of the complaint, as it had been stated to the ghostly father at Rome, and as it is echoed back by him, is, that “certain Culdees, *se canonicos gerunt*, carry themselves as if they were canons.” This, however, might rather apply to some who did not reside at Monimusk; because those residing there are designed *quidam alii*, “certain others.” Finding that all right of taking any part in the election was denied to them, on the pretence that they were not canons; whatever aversion they might have to the change of their mode of life, they appear, at their own hand, without consulting either bishop or pope, to have erected themselves into a canonry. This, at least, is the obvious sense of the second article of complaint, as it stands in the chartulary of Aberdeen, unless it be viewed as the language of exaggeration, used in order to call forth the fulminations of the papal chair, because of their sacrilegious intrusion. *Quidam alii Aberdonensis Dioces. infra villam de Monimuske pertinentem ad ipsum quandam canoniam regularem, eodem renitente, contra justitiam construere non formidant, in ecclesie sue prejudicium et gravamen.* “Certain others of the diocese of Aberdeen, in the village of Monimusk, belonging to him [the Bishop of St Andrews], are not afraid iniquitously to erect a certain regular canonry, notwithstanding his opposition, to the prejudice of his church.”

4. We have here a proof of the power, and at the same

time a strong presumption of the ancient right, of the Culdees. From the interference of the bishop of St Andrews, it is evident that the bishop of Aberdeen had found them too strong for him. But even he, who seems in this instance to have claimed the dignity of primate, found it necessary to solicit the aid of the papal authority.

5. The manner in which the continued enjoyment of certain dues is expressed, clearly shews that they had been long settled in that quarter. They are allowed to hold these, *libere et quiete, juxta quod ab antiquis temporibus retro usque ad hec tempora habuerint*, “freely and peaceably, in the same manner in which they have enjoyed them from ancient times even to the present day.”

6. There is pretty good reason for concluding from this very deed, that the keen adherents to the church of Rome did not consider them as good Romanists. We have already adverted to the different charges exhibited against them. They speak of them as men who were not actuated by a due regard to the authority of their superiors, who were “*not afraid, contrary to justice, to erect a certain regular canonry.*” If the charge be not exaggerated, this was undoubtedly a bold step. The very term *certain, quondam canoniam*, seems to contain a proof, that even, in this erection, the Culdees did not strictly conform to the papal ideas of a canonry.

They are represented as non-descripts, as a sort of anomalous species, for which the church of Rome, notwithstanding the great compass of her religious nomenclature, could find no proper designation. They are not even allowed the name

of *monks*, although observing the rule prescribed by one of the saints in her own calendar. For it is said ; *Non licebit eisdem Kildeis, vitam seu ordinem monachorum vel canonicorum regularium, sine consensu ipsius Episcopi vel successorum, ibidem profiteri in perpetuum.* “ It shall never be permitted to these Kildees to profess, either the monastic order, or that of canons regular, without the consent of the bishop, or of his successors.” They were Culdees, yet neither monks nor canons regular. In what light then did the church of Rome view them, if neither as monks nor as canons ?

7. Taking it for granted, that, according to the statement given in the Register of Aberdeen, they did erect a “ certain regular canonry” at Monimusk ; as it appears that it was not of such a description as to please the keen abettors of the Romish interest ; one thing highly offensive, in the conduct of the Culdees, was their proceeding to take this step *without the consent of the bishop.* They had in former times claimed a superiority over bishops, whom they viewed as deriving their power from them. When, therefore, about to found a monastery in any place, they did not think of asking the sanction of those whom they had themselves invested with ecclesiastic authority. Those of Monimusk retained their old mode of procedure ; and thus shewed that they were not reduced to that canonical or implicit obedience, which was now become the great test of sanctity.

8. There is great ground to think, that, in the agreement with respect to one refectory, and one dormitory, more is included than has yet been mentioned. We know that it was

a charge exhibited against the Culdees of St Andrews, that their wives, children, and relations, claimed and made use of the offerings, presented at the altar, as their own. May it not be supposed, that, in the article with respect to one refectory, &c. there is a secret thrust at some of the Culdees at Monimusk, who neither ate nor slept in the monastery, but with their families in their own houses?

It may seem unaccountable, that, while the papal delegates allow the possession of a distinct oratory, refectory, and dormitory to the Culdees, they should preclude them from having any cemetery, save that which belonged to the parish church of Monimusk. This exception might appear to have proceeded from mere caprice, or from some strange perverseness. But we have here, I apprehend, a striking instance of their consciousness of the very high popularity of the Culdees. The bishop of St Andrews and his adherents knew that if there was a distinct cemetery belonging to this society, that of the parish, which the bishop considered as his, would be unfrequented; and thus one very considerable source of emolument to his canonical friends would be dried up. Hence, in the agreement, only the fourth part of the funeral oblations is appropriated to the Culdees, though formerly they had the whole.

This is illustrated by a prior convention between the canons regular of St Andrews and the Culdees there, in the time of Roger, the predecessor of Malvoisin; in which the canons appropriate to themselves, besides other offerings, all those made at the time of death, except when the Culdees

are to be interred; to whom a right is reserved of being buried where they choose.¹ If we can suppose, that the same oppression was carried on in this early period as in later times, we need not wonder that the canons wished to secure to themselves these mortuary gifts. Before the reformation, the priest claimed, not only what was called the *Corpsrent*, but a cow, and the uppermost cloth which had covered the deceased.²

Goodall also says; “Another cause of quarrel was, that it seems, by a *pretended* gift from the Earl of Mar, they had possessed themselves of some lands that belonged to the bishop, without his consent; and by this deed of agreement, bound themselves not to do the like afterwards, either by that earl’s or any other man’s gift.”³

The Culdees seem to have been doomed, like many worthy men, not only to be oppressed by their contemporaries, but to be traduced by those in succeeding ages, who, from their profession, ought rather to have appeared as vindicators of their character. It is evident, that this quarrel was picked by William Malvoisin, that he might have a pretext for ejecting the Culdees. It was the good bishop who *pretended* a right, which, there is reason to think, he could never have established

¹ Ceteris in manu Canonicorum retentis, scil. sponsaliis, purificationibus, oblationibus, baptismo, corporibus defunctorum, exceptis corporibus Kelledorum, qui ubi voluerint sepelientur. Registr. Sti. Andr. Macfarl. MS. p. 385.

² A particular account of these cruel exactions, is given in the Scottish Dictionary, vo. *Corpsrent*, and *Umast*.

³ Pref. to Catal. xiii.

in any way but by the arm of power. The matter of dispute is, in the deed of compromise, called “a certain canonry, or canonical parish, belonging to him.” This must have been the church of Lorthel, with the lands annexed, tithes, &c. For it is to this that the charter, granted by Gilchrist, expressly refers. ¹ Now, this gift was confirmed to the Culdees by John Bishop of Aberdeen, in two distinct deeds. ² In another, he confirmed to them the gift of the church of Afford by the same earl. This John was elected about the year 1200, perhaps somewhat earlier.

This was previous to the time of Malvoisin. For he was not Bishop of St Andrews till the year 1202. He did not enforce his claim on this “canonical parish,” till nearly twenty years after his instalment. Can it be at all imagined, that neither he, nor his predecessor Roger, would endeavour to prevent all these confirmations, had they entertained the idea that they had any rightful claim? But the gifts of the Earl of Mar seem to have been the great sources of the temporal support of the Culdees; and therefore, in order to their suppression at Monimusk, these must be wrested from them.

Spotiswood is chargeable with great inaccuracy, when he says, that Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, in the reign of William the Lion, built at Monimusk “a priory for *the canon-regulars of St Andrews*, after which the Culdees were turned out of their possessions.” ³ Nothing can be more clear, from

¹ V. Appendix, No. X.

² V. Appendix, No. XII.

³ Account of Religious Houses, p. 417, 418.

his own charter, than that the earl was peculiarly attached to this description of religious. He expressly “grants, and confirms, to God, and to the church of St Mary of Monimusk, *et Keledeis ibidem servientibus et servituris*, “and to the Culdees serving, and to serve, there,” the church and lands afterwards specified, “in perpetual alms to them, for the safety and prosperity of his Lord King William, his son, and those who were dear to him,” &c. He adds; “I will, and enjoy, that the foresaid Culdees shall possess the foresaid church, with all its pertinents, as freely, and quietly, fully, and honourably, in perpetual alms, as other canons, or monks, or other religious men whatsoever, in the whole kingdom of Scotland hold any church or alms, by the donation of baron or earl.”¹ But, indeed, how can it for a moment be supposed that Gilchrist built a priory here for canons regular; when it is well known, that the very matter of controversy between the Culdees and the Bishop of St Andrews, was the *pretended* gift of lands to them by Gilchrist?

Let it not be supposed, however, that Gilchrist was the founder of the Culdean establishment at Monimusk, though he built a monastery for them. For it is said, in the second charter given by John Bishop of Aberdeen, that “G. Earl of Mar, gave the church of Lorthel,” &c. to his monastery, which he constructed at Monimusk, in the church of St Mary, *in which the Culdees formerly were.*” While John confirms to them the possession of this monastery, and the lands con-

¹ V. Charter, Appendix, No. X.

nected with it, that they might hold it as any other religious house did in Scotland ; he adds, that they shall “ not be subject to any other house, or do homage to any other than to himself and his successors ; and that they shall give such subjection as the other religious houses throughout Scotland, constituted in episcopates, owe to their bishop.”¹ The first clause might seem to secure them against the usurpations of the canons regular ; and the second might be meant to guard against such high pretensions as, he knew, the Culdees had formerly made.

It is worthy of remark, however, that John seems unwilling to express himself entirely in the stile of Gilchrist. The bishop, who could be no stranger to the predilection of the court for canons, bears, as far as possible, to this side in his language. Gilchrist speaks only of Culdees ; John, of *Canonici, qui Keledei dicuntur*, of “ canons, who are called Culdees ;” and towards the close, he merely calls them, *prelate Canonici*, “ the foresaid canons,” dropping their proper designation entirely.

It appears, from the vestiges of ancient history which yet remain, that a variety of means had been used for subduing them at Monimusk. The first attempt, as we have seen, was to reduce them to the rank of hospitallers. But, as they persisted in contending for their rights, and were supported by Gilchrist Earl of Mar, by Gartenach and Roger, Earls of Buchan, and other men of rank ; Malvoisin, how anxious

¹ V. Charter, Appendix, No. XII.

soever he was entirely to suppress the society, found it necessary to compromise matters. He allowed them to live according to their own rule, if they would acknowledge him as their founder, and give up those lands which rendered them too powerful.

This plan must have been long in contemplation. For the pope appointed arbiters in the thirteenth year of his pontificate; which corresponds to A. 1211, or 1212. But it does not seem to have been observed, that this scheme was not carried into effect till more than seven years after. This appears from the ancient writing, which contains the *Convention*. It would even seem that the papal bull was expressed indefinitely, to be put in force, or not, as occasion should require. For, in this, he specifies no names; but merely nominates his “beloved sons, the Abbots of Mailros, and of Dryburgh, and the Archdeacon of Glasgow.” Now, one of the persons who acted was not in office at the time of the appointment. Adam was elected Abbot of Mailros, A. 1219.¹ As Robert Archdeacon of Glasgow died A. 1222;² it is evident that the arbitration must have been made by them between the years 1219 and 1222.

But even the business of the compromise did not subdue the spirits of the Culdees. Disgusted at the humiliating restrictions to which they were subjected, some of them left their monastery, and preferred living in other religious houses, whether of their own description, or not, we cannot pretend

¹ Chron. de Mailros, p. 197.

² Ibid. p. 199.

to determine, or perhaps acting as curates in parishes. For, in the register, we have a letter addressed by the Bishop of St Andrews “ to all abbots, priors, archdeacons, officials, and all rectors of churches ; also to all his subjects, whether clergy or laity, throughout his diocese.” He begins as if he had been as zealous for the strict observation of the Culdean rule, as of that of the canons regular ; with great solemnity reminding those to whom he writes, that “ it is certain that those, who, under pretence of religion, have left the secular habit, deprive themselves of any right to return to the world ; and that he who presumes, by his own temerity, to depart from any place of religion, deserves, like the dog returning to his vomit, and the sow that has been washed to her wallowing in the mire, to be had in abomination both by God and by man.” “ Therefore,” he adds, “ moved by the just intreaty of our *beloved sons*, the Prior and Culdees of Monimusk, we require of you all, by these presents, that you presume not to admit any of the brethren of the said place, who have assumed the religious habit there, and have professed themselves, to reside among you, without the licence of the Prior and Culdees, and letters of recommendation given to them ; or to admit them to fellowship ; but rather that you hold such an one as a heathen man and a publican, until, reduced by repentance, he return to his proper residence and society, to give satisfaction for his offences, and, according to the institutions of their own rule, receive canonical discipline.” *

* V. Appendix, No. XVIII.

This keen adversary of the Culdees died A. 1233, and was succeeded by David, who continued in the see till the year 1250. There is a charter of his in the register, confirming the grant of some lands to this priory. But it does not mention the Culdees; being addressed to "the prior of Monimusk, and the *canons* there serving God, and to serve him for ever." This designation, however, does not imply that by this time they were canons regular. It might rather seem, that the attempt was renewed to convert the priory into an hospital. For the expressed design of the gift is, "for the sustentation of the poor, and of pilgrims that flocked thither." The only witness, whose name is mentioned, is Adam de Malkarviston, undoubtedly the same who was provost of the Culdean church of St Mary in the city of St Andrews, and who was cited to Inverkeithing, A. 1250.

The register also contains posterior charters, granted in favour of the church of Monimusk, by Adam, Gilbert, and Peter, Bishops of Aberdeen. But in none of them are the Culdees named. The phraseology is, "the canons residing there."† It does not appear that these were canons regular. But the bishops use the name *canons*, as applicable to the Culdees, because they professed to observe a religious rule; while they avoid the name which these monastics preferred, as wishing it to be buried in oblivion.

We have also a rental of the priory of Monimusk for the year 1260, which was about forty years after the agreement

† V. Reg. Sti Andr. p. 433, 434.

between the Culdees there and Malvoisin. Perhaps it must, therefore, be viewed as giving the state of the priory, after it had assumed more of the canonical form. ¹

Goodall asserts, that “ there is not one syllable of the first article of that agreement which is given us by Sir James Dalrymple, p. 281, viz. “ That the Culdees of Monimusk should live in communion, after the manner of Culdees.” ² But undoubtedly, this is at least taken for granted in the deed; nay, it is the very thing conceded by the bishop on the terms there stipulated. They are acknowledged by the name of Culdees; they are to have a prior of their own, only so far subject to the bishop, with respect to nomination, that a list of three must be given in to him, that he may fix on one of them; and they are allowed their original number of twelve monks, beside the prior, and to have one oratory, one refectory, and one dormitory. This is farther confirmed by the circumstance, that, as has been seen, the same bishop, in another deed, acknowledges their peculiar rule of life: as he requires the wandering Culdees to “ return to their own house and companions;” and says, that they should receive canonical discipline according to the institution of their own rule.” ³ This strongly resembles an agreement on his part, “ that they should live in communion after the manner of Culdees.’

¹ V. Appendix, No. XII.

² Pref. to Keith's Catalogue, XIII.

³ *Ad domum proprium et confratres revertatur, super transgressionibus suis plenius satisfactori, et juxta institutiones regule ipsorum canonicam recepturas disciplinam.* Registr. Sti Andr. p. 436. V. Append. No. XVIII.

Sir James Dalrymple, according to Goodall's estimation, "has forgotten to give the main foundation of this controversy, which was, that these Culdees would needs be *canons-regular*, and would erect themselves into a canonry, not only without the consent, but against the declared will of the bishop their patron and founder."¹ After the most attentive examination of all the ancient writers I can find on the subject, I do not perceive that there is any proper ground for this assertion. The mistake has probably arisen from the ambiguity of the term *canon*. By this time, in most of our cathedrals, the chapter consisted of those ecclesiastics denominated *canons-regular*, who generally followed the rule of St Augustine. The Culdees claimed a right to act as the chapter, or, in other words, to elect the bishop. On this ground, as also because they observed a certain rule of their own, they were frequently designed canons in a general sense.²

¹ Pref. ut sup.

² Some ancient writers have observed, that it is a mere solecism to call any by the name of *Canonici*, who are secular clergy; because none can be canons, except regulars. V. Du Cange, vo. *Canonici*, col. 174. "*Canons Regular*," he says, "are those who live *secundum regulam*, according to rule, that is, according to the rule which is proper, and prescribed, to them; whereas seculars are said to live *secundum canones*, according to the canons, or rules which are prescribed to all clergymen."

"All our churches," says Spotiswood, "formerly belonged either to Regulars or Seculars. The *Regulars* followed the rule of St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, St Bennet, or some private statutes approved by the pope; and lived, slept, and took their diet together, under the same roof. They were either Canons, Monks, or Friars; and their houses were called Abbacies, Priors, or Convents. The *Seculars* had their private rules, composed by their

But, while they asserted their ancient right to choose the bishops, they manifested no inclination to renounce their peculiar rule.

The complaint made by the Bishop of St Andrews properly includes two charges, the one limited, the other general. The first is, that, *quidam se Canonicos gerunt*, "certain" of the Culdees "act as canons." There is nothing here which shews that they "would needs be canons regular." Did they mean to renounce their own rule for that of St Augustine or Benedict? No; the obvious meaning is, that some of them claimed that right to choose the bishop, which had formerly belonged to their body, but was now transferred to the canons regular of Aberdeen. The second is exhibited against them all. They "were not afraid to erect themselves into a canony," as Goodall expresses it; or, as it should be rendered, according to the Chartulary of Aberdeen, "to erect a certain regular canony, notwithstanding the resistance of the bishop, contrary to justice, and to the prejudice and grievance of his church." Those of the second class are distinguished by their place of residence. They are said to be "certain others, of the diocese of Aberdeen, below the village of Monimusk belonging to him." Both those who acted

chapters, or borrowed from other colleges abroad; which statutes were not commonly approved of by Rome. They lived separately in their cloisters, or in private houses near to their churches; and were governed by a Dean [*Decanus*] or Provost [*Praepositus*].—Account of Religious Houses, p. 411, 412.

as canons, putting themselves forward in the election of the bishop, as perhaps residing at Aberdeen, or in its vicinity, and others who did not, concurred in this erection.

There is, however, a variation, as to phraseology, between the copy of this deed as given in the Chartulary of Aberdeen, and that which we have in the Register of St Andrews. In the former the phrase is, *quandam canoniam regularem*; in the latter, *quandam canonicam parochiam*. It can scarcely be supposed, that this difference has been owing to the carelessness of a copyist. Or, if there has been an error in transcribing, it would be more natural to suppose that this was in the Chartulary of Aberdeen; because the Bishop of St Andrews, having managed this cause, would of course have the original agreement. It may indeed be supposed, that the phrase, *canoniam regularem*, had been used in the original deed; but that, when it came to be examined by the bishop, he found the assertion contrary to truth, and therefore made the necessary alteration. For, to whatever cause the variation be owing, it is obvious, that the expression, “a certain regular canonry,” was not applicable to the foundation at Monimusk. It is in fact at war with all the rest of the deed. For, as the bishop was eager to convert the Culdean monasteries into regular canonries, he could have had no scruple to comply with those of this place, if they were willing to adopt the new rule, on the ground of the restrictions which the deed of agreement actually contains. Can it be conceived, that, if they wished to be canons regular, he would have constrain-

ed them to retain the designations of *Kelidei* and *Con-Kelidei*, and their ancient rule and mode of discipline, as far as was consistent with his modifications? Or would he have added these words? *Et in electione Prioris vel Magistri Kelideorum ita fiet in perpetuum.* It is not said, that they were not to become canons regular without the consent of their bishop; but that they were not to become Culdees, or canonical brethren; that is, none, though pretending to be Culdees by succession, were to be received into their monastery without his consent; nor were they ever to exceed the prescribed number. Had they been any wise inclined to become canons regular, the Bishop of St Andrews, if he acted in the usual manner, instead of depriving them of the donations made by the Earl of Mar, would most probably have added to them. But, that they never testified any such inclination, is evident, not only from the tenor of this agreement, but from a posterior deed formerly referred to, enjoining the return of the fugitive Culdees.

It must at the same time be evident, that the phrase, *canonicam parochiam*, is most consonant to the whole strain of the agreement; and may be viewed as the language that Malvoisin had used in the complaint, against the Culdees, which he made to the pope. There seems no good reason to doubt that it refers to what had been done by Gilchrist, Earl of Mar, who had built for them a new priory at Monimusk; to which, *donavit coenobio suo quod construxit*, he gave the church of Lorthel, properly Lochel, with its land and pertinents;

and the church of Innerochtin, now Strathdon, with the same.

It is this which seems to be designed "a certain canonical parish;" and properly enough, because of the intention of the donor, Earl Gilchrist, to support the Culdees by this means. The bishop might have continued to connive at their establishment, had they still been confined to their old priory. But now, when they had got a new one built, with such ample endowments, he thought it necessary to humble their pride. He seems, indeed, to have been afraid that they might become too powerful for him. He therefore takes the shortest course, by complaining to the Holy Father at Rome, that the lands, which the Earl of Mar had given to them, were his property.