St Rule and the Culdees.

Stretched in the sunny light of victory bask The Host that followed Urien as he strode O'er heaps of slain.

From wood and moss
Druids descend, auxiliars of the cross—
Rush on the fight, to harps preferring swords
And everlasting deeds to burning words!

But Heaven's high will
Permits a second and darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
The relics of the sword flee to the mountains;
O wretched land!

But

Who comes with functions apostolical?

Mark him!—of shoulders curved and stature tall,
Black hair, and vivid eye, and meagre cheek,
His prominent feature like an eagle's beak;
A man whose aspect doth at once appal
And strike with reverence.

- Wordsworth.

O a pedigree-loving nation like ours—a nation whose very name spells antiquity and mystery—traditional stories of old-world times are always glamorously fascinating. Just such a tale is the legend of St Rule, about which there may be, as indeed there seem to be, scintillations of truth, despite the fact that it is monkish, and overshadowed by the misty cobwebs of a very distant and darkish antepast.

Many hundreds of years ago, say the monastic writers, there

lived in the city of Patras, on the Grecian shores, a man of God called Regulus. Something like three centuries had elapsed since the Apostle Andrew had suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, and his remains, after being enshrined, had been entrusted to the care of the Achaian monk. One night an angel appeared to him in a vision, and, pointing to the sacred reliquary, commanded him to take from thence an arm-bone, three of the fingers of the right hand, and three toes, and carry them carefully to a distant island in the great Western Sea. At first the saint hesitated to attend to the mysterious mandate, and was again told to trust himself to the ocean till he should arrive at some unknown haven in the island of Albion. Resolved on rendering immediate obedience, Regulus

Hoisted sails, and, with his chosen few, Bade to his native plains a last adieu,

after procuring from the shrine of the apostle the necessary relics. He took with him upon the hazardous voyage fourteen companions—Damianus, a presbyter; two deacons—Gelasius and Cubaculus by name; eight hermits, and three pious virgins or nuns.

Fair winds bore them away westward—past Malta, of sacred memory to the heroic crew, alongside the shores of Africa, through the Straits of Gibraltar into the wild, restless Atlantic, round the rugged coasts of Spain and France, and up the English Channel into the German Ocean, till, after a tempestuous voyage of two years, their ship was dashed to pieces upon the rocks of St Andrews Bay, and they themselves cast ashore, losing everything save the relics of St Andrew which were miraculously preserved.

"The date assigned to Regulus's arrival is 29th October, 370 A.D. The propriety of his setting sail at the very period when he committed his barge to the ocean has been pointed out with becoming gravity and minuteness. Had he been three days later in seeking for the relics at the shrine of Patras, they had

been removed by the Emperor Constantine, who then visited the city, to carry away the remains of the apostle to Constantinople."

On the unconscious shore to which Providence had led them, an ocean-cave was displayed, as if by magic, to their wondering eyes. In this rugged, weather-beaten excavation, almost under the shadow of St Regulus' Tower, they found shelter, and here

> Good St Rule his holy lay, From midnight to the dawn of day, Sang to the billows' sound.

And at early dawn, and when the twilight glimmered away and was lost in the embrace of shadowy eventide—"the propitious hour" for frail mortality—the pensive votaries repaired to their rocky, shell-roofed penance-cell, where their tortured souls, wearied with the world's carking cares, hungered after goodness and grace, and their anguish melted as peace spread her covering wings over their aching, restless spirits.

"Originally consisting of two cells or apartments connected with each other, this historic cavern has suffered much from destructive hands during recent years, the crumbling nature of the rock rendering this all the more easy. Thirty years ago traces of some kind of stone altar were still visible, but nowadays the most imaginative would scarcely attempt to point the situation of this holy shrine, so much has the rock been defaced and broken away." Within the craggy bosom of the cavern Lady Buchan was wont to enjoy herself, towards the close of last century, by giving summer tea-parties, from which circumstance it has since been called Lady Buchan's cave.

It was a haggard, heathen land, infested with wild beasts and wilder men, to which Regulus and his comrades had been divinely sent. But as "fishers of men" who had bent on indurated knees before high Heaven's gracious throne, they were neither troubled nor dismayed. A rich harvest awaited them, and they were eager for the gleaning. Before them stretched a

wild, tempestuous ocean of ignorance and superstition, of darkness and disorder; but that rugged heathendom, where bloodshed, rapine, and clan feuds raged unceasingly and unmolested, and Druid priests and kinglet chiefs made the task the harder, they set themselves to reclaim from the dark, wintry night which enveloped it. Their oft-repeated but gladsome words, breathing peace and giving comfort, struck home in the hearts of the barbarous throng.

Very soon the news is wafted far and wide that a company of holy men and maidens have been stranded on the Horestian coasts, and are publishing abroad some mysterious doctrine, which, if not seen to at once, is likely to entirely metamorphose the religion of Pictland. By and by it reaches the ears of the king. Hergust was his name. His curiosity is aroused,—he must see these holy people for himself, must hear this unknown doctrine which his subjects are speaking so much about, for he is "a man of superior sagacity, and of an amiable and benevolent disposition." And so he visits the strangers in their grotto at Muckross, which was the name of the place where they had been shipwrecked, is struck with the priestly appearance of St Rule, and drinks eagerly in the words which fall from his sacred lips.

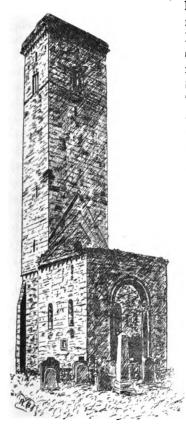
The monarch leans
Towards the pure truths this Delegate propounds;

Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
With careful hesitation—then convenes
A synod of his counsellors.

No doubt the Pictish sovereign remembered having heard something of the new doctrine before; no doubt he had heard it, for Christianity was introduced into England as early as the end of the second century, and it was no uncommon thing for even our heathen kings to be schooled and tutored amongst their southern neighbours.

Before venturing further, let us understand that we are standing on debatable ground. There be many who date the introduction of Christianity into Scotland with the coming of St

Columba and his disciples to Iona in 563 A.D., and consider the whole story of St Rule but an empty, idle forgery, because it emanated from the cloisters, which were looked upon as perfect store-rooms of fables. That may be so, but these same cloisters



ST REGULUS' TOWER.

have furnished us with all, or nearly all, our ancient history. Moreover, viewing the whole story as fictitious, how happens it that there are in the city of St Andrews a St Regulus' Tower, a St Regulus' Chapel, and a St Regulus' Cave? We can understand how the town might come to be called by its present-day name,-from the St Andrew monks of Hexham Abbey; but it would be hard indeed to disbelieve the presence of St Rule in Scotland at all. And granting that Regulus did not come at the time the monastic writers assert, whence did he come? Who was he? and when did he live?

Grant me permission to allow Principal Shairp to answer these questions. "The earliest sacred place on this wind-swept, foam-fringed promontory was the cave in the sandstone cliff,—it is now so crumbled away as to be almost

indiscernible. But thither, probably soon after A.D. 600, came a Columban eremite, and made the cave his abode; and this

was, it is suggested, the historic personage who was afterwards transformed into the mythic Regulus. Hard by, there probably soon arose one of those primitive monasteries of wicker-work, in which would dwell a small brotherhood of Columban monks from Iona."

Here, however, there are too many probabilities—too many assumptions. The learned writer does not deny the presence of St Rule,—he even gives credit to the relics being brought thither; but as to whence they came he will not hazard an opinion. It might be from Patras or Constantinople. strange thing is that Shairp, while he urges us to "dismiss the groundless belief that the Culdees were Columbites," speaks of Columban monks living at St Andrews at the close of the ninth century, and then says that "Constantine, one of the Scottish kings, worn out with age and troubles, retired to the monastery of St Andrews in A.D. 942, living there as a Culdee till he died in that 'dreary pile'—the pile being the Culdee monastery of Kirkheugh,"—the sum and substance of which is that the Culdees did not amalgamate with the Columbites, but became so numerous and powerful that they set up for themselves a monastery which, within the short space of half a century. became a dreary pile!

Before bidding adieu to a subject so enticing yet so debatable as the coming of St Rule, consider for a moment the Tower which bears his name. Architectural authorities, even the best of them, give it only a conjectural date. Robertson, the antiquary, believes it was built about A.D. 1127, its insignificant proportions being the result of the impecuniosity of the founder, Bishop Robert, and its object the overshadowing of the humble Culdee monastery on the Kirk Hill, which had succeeded the small wattle-built huts of the primitive missionaries.

Believe this, and Regulus must have been a Romish monk;—had he been other, it is beyond the limits of credibility that Bishop Robert or any succeeding bishop would have cared to dedicate such an edifice to one belonging to a party which was

dwindling bit by bit, and being shorn of its rights and lands by Roman clerics and monks. Were this the case, too, we should have something very definite indeed regarding the saint—something certainly as substantial as the legendary tale which proclaims his arrival. The truth is, however, that Regulus was neither a Columbite nora Romish monk, but a Culdee out-and-out. And now, only another word in support of this claim. Was Servanus, the Christian law-teacher of Culross, a Columbite? And the gentle-hearted, sweet-voiced, prince-born Kentigern—the white-haired Kentigern who met the great saint of Iona on the banks of the Molendinar Burn, "their coming together being an occasion of great joy,"—was he a Columbite? Were not both of them well-known men of God before Columba ever set foot on Scottish soil?

"The Tower of St Regulus," says Dr Rogers in his admirable work on St Andrews, "is one hundred and eight feet high, and the side of its base, within the walls, is twenty feet. It is built of neatly hewn stones of a most durable nature,—where the stones were procured remains undiscovered. It is probable that they were brought from a distance, as no stone can be found for many miles round the city of exactly similar colour and hardness and the crevices between them are so thoroughly and powerfully cemented with lime that it bids fair to survive every building, ancient and modern, in the city. On the east side of the Tower still remain the walls of the chapel with which it was connected, and from three different ranges of marking or raggling on the Tower it would seem that the Chapel must have been provided with three different roofs, either given to it at three different eras, or placed on it at its erection, so as completely to secure the holy inmates from the severity of the storm.

When and by whom it was erected are questions which will remain for ever unsettled; and the uncertain guide of tradition or even conjecture can alone be the means by which the antiquary or historian can arrive at any account of its origin. If the legend be correct, the date of the foundation must be assigned to the latter part of the fourth century, which would make it one of the most ancient buildings in the kingdom. Many antiquaries, however, have given it a much later date, but the greater number agree in assigning its origin to a period prior to the ninth century, owing to the entire absence of any portion of Gothic architecture, which is understood to have been adopted in this country about that era. And if the Chapel and Tower bear marks of being erected at so remote a period as the ninth century, we may have less hesitation in giving credit to the story of the erection at a still more distant date."

According to accounts, Hergust became one of the earliest proselytes. He cradled and nursed the new religion, granted to the monk and his comrades who had come without scrip and without the wherewithal to procure their daily sustenance, sandaled and single-coated, extensive lands for their annual revenue, and erected an edifice for their worship—this chapel of St Rule.

Change of religion meant a change in the names of places. Before Regulus's arrival the eastern part of Fife was designated Muckross—the Peninsula of Swine, for it was a favourite resort of these wild animals; by Hergust, out of regard for his religious instructor, it was altered to Kilrymont—the Cella regis in monte of Buchanan, signifying the Church on the King's Mount, kil being the common Celtic prefix for a church of these early religionists.

Later monarchs, too, became their benefactors. From King Hungus, in recognition of his memorable victory over the Northumbrians at Athelstaneford, near Haddington, when, in a moment of extremest peril, he earnestly implored the assistance of St Andrew, they received a tenth of that king's dominions—"all the lands lying betwixt the seas Ishundenema and Slethruma, and bounded by a line extending from Largo by Ceres to Hyrhat-nachtan Machchrill, now called Had Nachtan. And the king gave this district of Kilrymont to God and St Andrew, His apostle, with its waters, meadows, fields,

pastures, moors, and woods, in a perpetual almsgift, with this peculiar privilege, that its inhabitants should be exempted from levies, the building of castles and bridges, and all taxes imposed by the State. In confirmation thereof the king, in presence of his nobles, brought a turf cut from that land and laid it on the altar of St Andrew."

Principal Shairp has graphically described the scene in the poetical effusion which he writes commemorating the visit of Robert the Bruce to St Andrews Cathedral on July 5th, 1318. He says:—

This sacred soil hath felt the beat, Age by age, of kingly feet, Hither come for prayer and vow; But of all none great as thou, Since the day thy great forbear, Pictish Angus, did appear O'er yon hill-top—at the head Of his warriors, vision-led, Holy Rule to duly greet, Refuged in his cave-retreat.

Fair that dawn for Scotland, when Met the priests and warrior-men. Peace-attired. In forefront there. With his feet and head all bare. Moved St Rule, and high in air Relics of the Apostle held; Following him, gray men of eld, Came the monks, their anthems singing, With the white-robed children flinging Up to heaven their choral chant, Most sweet-voiced and jubilant: Then barefoot, the King, his proud War-gear cast aside and bowed Low in reverence—last the throng Of his warriors brave and strong, Men of battle, moved along:

Seven times from east to west, Compass'd they the soil they bless'd, Making all the headlands o'er, Free to heaven for evermore.

From Boethius, too, we learn that Hungus also bestowed on the church images of Christ and the apostles in the precious metals, as well as a golden casket to contain the relics of St Andrew, who, he decreed, should henceforth be worshipped as the patron-saint of Scotland.

Much information regarding the early Christians is gleaned from the old registers written in the cloisters of the monastery at St Andrews. These excerpts inform us that St Regulus lived for thirty-two years in the East Neuk, serving God devoutly, teaching and exhorting with simplicity, with diligence, and with cheerfulness; by no means slothful in business, always fervent in spirit, and instant in prayer—thereby obeying to the full the divine injunction.

With Kilrymont as headquarters much good work was accomplished. The Word grew and prospered. Ecclesiology was begun among the Picts. Branch churches were established at Chondrohedalion, a place which was afterwards known as Hyrhat-Nachtan, and latterly Naughton; at Monichi, the present-day village of Moonzie; and at Forteviot, on the banks of the river Earn. And who knows but that even then, while Christianity was still, as one might say, in swaddling clothes, the ancient town of Abernethy may have been the capital of the Pictish dominions? It is not so very far away from Forteviot. Of this, at any rate, there can be no doubt whatever. -Abernethy was a place of much importance fourteen centuries ago, having public schools of learning and professors of sciences and arts, besides being the ecclesiastical metropolis of Scotland, until the episcopate was transferred to St Andrews by Kenneth II., on the dismemberment of the Pictish kingdom in 843 A.D.

From the register extracts we learn that, after the death of

St Regulus and his colleagues, there were in the church of Kilrymont thirteen Culdees who came into office "by succession to their fathers." Tredecim per successionem carnalem-i.e., thirteen by carnal succession—is the exact phrase, and over the few words considerable diversity of opinion has been manifested, and various interpretations put upon them. Among the Culdees marriage was not forbidden, any more than it was for a number of ages in the Christian church. Hereditary succession to the priesthood was, therefore, not uncommon. Latterly, however, this patrimonialism of holy orders became a bitter bone of contention between the Culdees and the Catholic priests, who looked upon succession holding a prior claim to election as disgracing and polluting the church. persons might be Culdees, but, after becoming members of the fraternity, they were not permitted to have their wives in their houses.

The Culdees acquired their name, it is suggested, either from the Celtic Cele-dé, meaning "servants of God"; or from an abbreviation of the Latin Cultores Dei—"worshippers of God." Wordsworth thus nobly eulogizes them:—

How beautiful your presence, how benign, Servants of God! who not a thought will share With the vain world; who, outwardly as bare As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine! Such priest

Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine Descended.

Evil thoughts are stayed At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat A benediction from his voice and hand.

From the convent at St Andrews they scattered themselves all over the country. In the course of time they were joined by the apostles of Columba. New settlements were called *cænobia*, and were founded by an *abbas* or chief presbyter, and

twelve associates termed socii, in imitation, no doubt, of the Great Master and His twelve disciples. The church, as most of the houses then adays would be, was generally of plain wood: hence we find but few traces of the Culdean existence. Round these institutions the neophytes or new converts would congregate to receive instruction; villages were erected, the adjoining lands were cultivated, grain-mills established, and a territory under spiritual government formed, over which the abbot or an emission i.e., an overseer—presided. They had their grades of office-from the bishop down to the scoloch or scholar who assisted in the services of the church. deacons' superintended the works of charity, and the praepositi acted as teachers in the schools. On baptism one became a brother or sister; on ordination a presbyter—an office which was given only to those who were found worthy and suitable to receive it. The ordained monk was then invested with episcopal authority, and delegated to a certain district.

It was not until the reign of Malcolm Caenmohr, however, that the country was properly divided into dioceses, the power of electing the bishops being vested in the Culdees, who generally chose one from their own society. This privilege they enjoyed up to the year 1273, when-Mr Robert Maule informs us-William Wishart, having been consecrated at Scone, set the Culdees at defiance and excluded them from the episcopateship. On the two succeeding bishops—Fraser and Lamberton attempting the same thing, the Culdees sent Prior Cumine to plead their cause at Rome before Pope Boniface VIII. But it was of no use. The Pontiff, making belief that he had the prerogative to appoint whomever he pleased, not only confirmed the election, but also sanctified the nominee. Thus it was that the power of the Culdees was gradually annihilated by the intrusion of the Papists, by whom they seem to have been treated very harshly indeed.

Unenlightened and bigoted as the Culdees certainly were, there are not wanting writers who willingly subscribe themselves their panegyrists, and speak of them in terms of the highest commendation. They led a holy, wise, and pious life consecrated to the service of the Most High—just such a life that the laity copied their example, became religiously mannered, and in the midst of temporal occupations lived virtuous lives. The most austere of them were anchorites—troglodytes, for their homes were caves—and, withdrawn from the noise of the world and the society of men, day and night they spent in the contemplation of things heavenly and eternal. The majority, however, were conventuals or monks. Many a valuable and useful lesson they bequeathed to the later clergy—lessons of incorruptibility and temperateness, the chief virtue of which was that their lives were so faultlessly consistent with their doctrines.

In conclusion, let us notice where the chief settlements of the Fifan Culdees were situated. The monarchs of olden times, it has already been remarked, were very kind to them. According to the register-excerpts Brude, the last of the Pictish sovereigns, dedit insulam de Loch-Levin, Deo Omnipotenti, Sancto Servano, et Keledeis heremetis ibi commorantibus et Deo servientibus—"gave to the Almighty, St Servanus, and the Culdean recluses who were sojourning and serving God there, the island of Lochleven," called of old The Inch, and, in present-day parlance, St Serf's Isle. The ruins of the ancient priory erected in 842 by Achaius, King of Scots, and dedicated to the honour and glory of St Serf, still appear in the grassy, gravel-fringed island. That square, thick-walled, but now roofless building, is the chapel, and adjacent are the crumbling foundations of the monastery.

Many are the interesting legends that are told of Servanus or St Serf. If we are to believe the story of Andro of Wyntoun,

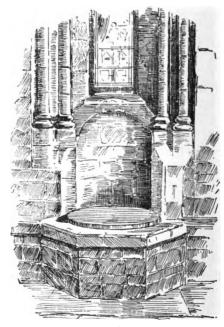
> He was of life an holy man— The king's son of Canaan,

who, having come to Scotland, received from King Brude all the land round about Culross.

And there he brocht up St Mungo, That syne was bishop of Glasgow. Syne frae Culross he passèd even To the Inche of Lochleven. King Brude, full of devotion, Made to St Serf donation Of that Inch: and he dwelt there Till seven years o'erpassèd were,

when he returned again to Culross, where "his cors found halowit sepulture." Of the Culdees who sat at the feet of this

Scottish Gamaliel was the royal Kentigern. We know him better. perhaps, by the apostolic name of St Mungo which is, by interpretation. "The Beloved." He was the love-son of Prince Eugenius and Thenew, daughter of Llew, a semi-pagan ruler of Lothian; and after labouring faithfully and successfully for the evangelization of Strathclyde, he died perfect in life and full of years. St Mungo's grand old city sprang up around the spot where the saint was buried, and in its venerable cathedral-



ST MUNGO'S WELL.

"striking memorial of the piety of ancient days"—may be seen his tomb and holy well.

The monastery of Lochleven—called also Port-moak, signifying "the dwelling of St Moak," who was its first abbot—afterwards became the property of the Austine-monks of St Andrews. The inhabitants, says Sibbald, speaking of his own time, show upon the side of the hill, above the monastery, a concavity like to a seat, where this abbot, for his recreation, sometimes used to solace himself—the tops of the adjoining rocks giving umbrage to the place which they called St Moucum's Seat, i.e., St Moak's Seat. Beneath the green sod of that lonely isle the remains of poor Patrick Graham, the primal archbishop of St Andrews, "a man of worth and learning, inferior to none of his time," find a last resting-place; so do those of St Ronan, an abbot of great sanctity, who lived and died in it at a good old age.

From Macbeth and Gruoch, his queen, the Culdees received the lands of Kirkness on the southern shore of the lake; King Edgar gave them Pittenweem, while from Malcolm Caenmohr they got the "Villa Balchristine"—the district of Balchrystie, near Colinsburgh.

All along the seaboard of Fife, from Kirkcaldy to the Cathedral city, are innumerable water-worn recesses, in which the Culdean anchorites had their homes. At Kilminning, near antique Crail, "with its ruddy-tiled roofs and crow-stepped gables," was a chapel dedicated to the same preacher whose name survives in the village of St Monans. The "stedd" of St Monan was here. It is still pointed out, and for many centuries thousands flocked to his shrine to be healed of their diseases. King David Bruce shared in the bounties; he was here miraculously freed from a barbed arrow-head which had rankled in his kingly flesh for five long years and more. Close inshore is the picturesque, spray-washed church, with its stout, squatlooking tower—David's gift of gratitude. To the east of St Monans is Pittenweem, with its maison-dieu or priory ruins, and

a double-apartmented cave, wherein resided the noted St Fillan and the martyred St Adrian. Of the latter more anon.

An interesting story is told by Camerarius about St Fillan who was abbot of Pittenweem, from which priory he retired about the middle of the seventh century, and died a hermit in the wilds of Glenorchy, A.D. 649. During his abbotship he transcribed the Scriptures, which was "the most innocent and praiseworthy occupation of those who spent their lives in convents." Apparently the task was chiefly carried on in the night-time; yet the worthy abbé did not waste the midnight oil over it, for while he was engaged in the exercise his left arm and hand were illuminated to such an extent that the writer was enabled to do without rush-light—a miracle which, by the way, was a source of much saving to the convent, as St Fillan used to spend whole nights over his transcriptions.

St Adrian or Odran was the chief of a colony of pious people who had their original headquarters in the caves of Caiplie, between Crail and Kilrenny. When the hosts of the heathen Norsemen, however, came swarming overseas to paralyse the Scots and harry their coasts, Adrian and his followers—to the great number of six thousand, says the small voice of the pastsought refuge on the Isle of May; but neither the sanctity of the place nor the religious innocence of the fugitives could restrain the fiery Danes from putting every one of them to a most horrible death. Andro of Wyntoun, with all an old chronicler's punctiliousness for days and dates, tells us the lamentable massacre of the ecclesiastics happened on a "haly Thursday," about the year 874 A.D., when Constantine II. was king. How Thor must have smiled—it was his day—and Odin too,—and all the hosts of the Valhallan pagandom, when they heard the glorious news! Among those who perished on that awful day were Bishops Stolbrand and Glodian, and St Monan whom we have already spoken of-the Archdeacon of St Andrews.

The "lang toon" of Kirkcaldy is supposed to be, though not

unquestionably, of Culdean designation; and at Dysart—in the desertum or fasting-cell from which the town derives its name, the king-born St Serf was rudely awakened, as he "lay eftir maytins in hys bede," by the Wicked One who came to browbeat him with questions of theological disputation. The Saint, however, was obdurate and impregnable, and the Devil, finding flattery as well as argument unavailing, went away acknowledging that Servanus was indeed "a wise man."

Another Culdean anchorite called Conquhar or Conacher bequeathed his name to Kilconquhar. And such was the reputation of these simple-minded early Christians that Constantine III., after losing his trans-Bodotriatic provinces—his territories across the Forth—abdicated his throne and retired to the monastery of St Andrews, in grief and down-heartedness, to spend the eventide of his life among the holy brethren. Nor was Constantine the only monarch who laid aside his regal robes for the rigidity of monastic discipline. In 738 a.d., Coelwolf, king of Northumbria, to whom Bede dedicates his "Ecclesiastical History," withdrew to Lindisfarne, where he died "in the odour of sanctity."

Many hooded Cenobites there are, Who in their private cells have yet a care Of public quiet; unambitious men, Counsellors of the world, of piercing ken, Whose fervent exhortations from afar Move princes to their duty, peace or war.

