

Persecution, about the Middle of the third Century in the Infancy of Christianity, had forced into Deserts and Mountains: where they not only found a safe Retreat from the Fury of the Storm, but also more Time and Liberty to exercise themselves in Acts of Duty and Divine Contemplations. They were commonly known by the Name of *anachoriti* Anchorites, from their retiring from Society, and living in private Cells in the Wilderness. Such were Paul, Antony, and Hilarion, the first Founders of the Monastick Life in Egypt and Palestine, from whom other Monks took their Model. Of this Sort were our ancient Cildes and Keldes, so termed, either from *colider*, because they were *collores dei*, according to Hektor Boetius, or from living in Cells, as B. Spotswood would have it. These were Christian Britains who flying Dioclesian's Persecution, retired first to the Isle of Man, and afterwards spread themselves thro' Scotland. They lived solitary, but famous for Learning and good Life, breathing a Spirit of Devotion, and left such an Opinion of their Holiness behind them, that their Cells after their Death were converted into Churches. So Kilmarnock, Kilpatrick, Kelring &c. is, as some should say *Cella Martini*, *Cella Patricij*, *Cella Nipiani*. This Sort of Life tho' at first forced upon them by Necessity, became so agreeable to some of them, that when the Times grew more calm and the Blast of Persecution was over, they would not return to their ancient Habitations again or to secular Business, but chose rather to continue in those Cottages or Cells which they made to themselves in the Wilderness. Most of the Solitaries who found Content in a retired Life, thought fit to go together into Monasteries, where they might be assisting and comfortable to one another. This was done by the Influence and Perswasion of Columba, who in Constantine the Second's Reign returned from Ireland, whether he had gone An. 491. with St. Patrick to assist in the Conversion of that Nation. He founded the Monastrey of Icolmkill in one of our western Isles for that End. After this Example, other Monasteries were erected at Abernethy, Dunkeld, Helrimont, Abercorn, Melrose, Lichwin, Monimusk, Kinkell, and the Monastrey of Icolmkill had an extended Jurisdiction over all the rest. It was the Burial-place of our Kings from Fergus 2. till Malcolm Canmore, where 40 of them lay interred. These Monasteries were Nurseries and Seminaries of Religion and Learning, out of which all Parochial Churches were planted with Ministers. Upon the Ruins of these Keldes, who by the Embarques of Rome were got thrust out about the Beginning of the 14. Century a most corrupt regular and

and secular Clergy were set up. Monachism by the Distinction of Vowes Rules and different Orders, became a molty kind of thing, and Monks without Regard to these turned quite unruly and disorderly. A Shaven Crown was the Badge of all Monks, whereby they pretended to signify their firm Expectation of a Crown of Eternal Life, and that they had renounced the World. That they might not be at Liberty to forsake their profession when they pleased, they made Vowes at their Profession: whereof some were particular to every religious Order, others common to all Orders, as the three Vowes of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. The distinguished Offices among the Monks, were those of Abbots, Priors and Subpriors.

The Abbot was he in whom the chief Care and Management of the religious House was lodged. The Dignity of an ordinary Abbot is next to that of a Bishop. Some Abbots were independent on Bishops, and therefore called *abbates exempti*; others were invested with Episcopal Power. Tho' the Abbot was Head of his own Monastrey, yet several Monasteries were under one Provincial, without whose Leave, a Superior of all the religious Houses in his Province, no Monk could shift his Monastrey.

Priors were either dependent, or independent. Dependent Priors were either Claustral or Conventual. A Claustral Prior held Rank in the Monastrey next to the Abbot, and governed in his Absence, or during a Vacancy of the Office: as a Subprior supplied the Office of Prior in the like Circumstances. A Conventual Prior, was one who presided over a Party of Monks detach'd out of some Monastrey, and settled in a distinct Place, to look after remote Rents and Lands belonging to the Monastrey. The House where he lived was called *Cella*, or *grangia*, or *obediencia* to distinguish it from the principal Monastrey on which it depended. So the Priory of Urquhart in Murray, was a Cell belonging to the Monastrey of Dumfermling; the Priory of Machline in Kile depended on the Abbey of Melrose; the Priory of St. Mary's in Gallaway upon the Abbey of Holyroodhouse; the Priory of Reston in Angus, and Blantyre in Caidale were Cells belonging to the Abby of Jedburgh; Lismahago in Caidale and the Isle of May in Forth River, were Cells of Kelso. An Independent Prior, was the Head of a religious House called a Priory, not depending upon any Monastrey. For when the Dependent Priories revolted from their Duty, and set up for themselves, that turned a precedent for erecting Independent Priories.