

THE ORDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS IN SCOTLAND

BY THE REV. DAVID R. CURRIE, B.D., PH.D.

WITHIN twenty years of their recognition as an Order the disciples of Dominic de Guzman had established themselves in Scotland. Some nine years earlier they had appeared in England and very quickly founded houses in various parts of the country. They entered the northern kingdom almost certainly by way of Berwick some time in the year 1230. That is the date given by the *Melrose Chronicle*.¹ The sentence is not original. It was inserted in a later hand, but it is supported by Fordun and the author of the *Extracta*.² It is impossible now to say which was the first foundation. Spottiswoode gives the same year, 1230, for the foundation of the houses at Ayr, Edinburgh and Berwick. He also says that it was William Malvoisin, Bishop of St. Andrews, who was responsible for bringing the Friars Preachers to Scotland.³ On the other hand, the author of *De Scotorum Fortitudine* gives this honour to Friar Clement.⁴ If Spottiswoode is right and it was Malvoisin, then the fact is very interesting for Malvoisin was himself a Franciscan. But it is probable that both men had a hand in it, for Clement, who became afterwards Bishop of Dunblane, seems to have been a friend of Malvoisin's and was consecrated by him to that see at the Church of St. Mary of Wedale in 1233.⁵ He was almost certainly that same Clement who is mentioned in the *Acta* of the General Chapter held at London in 1250, and who was granted a mass to be said after his death by every priest-brother of the Order in the English Province.⁶

From the beginning, the Order of Friars Preachers had the support of the Scottish Kings. Alexander II is reputed to have been responsible for founding no less than eight convents: those already mentioned at Berwick, Ayr and Edinburgh, and also others at Perth, Aberdeen, Elgin, Stirling and Inverness, between the years 1230 and 1234.⁷ But he was

¹ Anderson, A. O., *Early Sources of Scot. Hist.*, ii, 470.

² *Extracta e Variis Cronicis Scocie*, p. 93.

³ *Munimenta Frat. Pred. de Are*, XIX.

⁴ Grubb, *Eccl. Hist. of Scotland*, i, 322.

⁵ *Melrose Chronicle*, p. 143.

⁶ *Sacrum Theatrum Dominicanum*, Tit. 537 (quoted by Cochran-Patrick, "*Mun. de Are*, XXXIV).

⁷ Grubb, *Ecclest. Hist.*, i, 315.

not the only patron. His chancellor, Bishop William of Bendington, founded a house in Glasgow some time between 1244 and 1246.¹ In the latter year Innocent IV issued a Bull from Lyons granting forty days' indulgence to all the faithful who should contribute to the completion of the church and other edifices which the Friars Preachers of Glasgow had begun to build.² At Wigtown another house was founded by Devorgilla Balliol and at St. Andrews by the chancellor, Archdeacon William Wishart.³

These Scottish convents formed part of the English Province, and so they continued, officially at least until 1481. But for all practical purposes a separation had been effected before that time. During the long War of Independence the Scottish Dominicans, together indeed with the whole body of the Scottish clergy, found themselves naturally at variance with their English brothers. In England Edward I, in the prosecution of his claims to overlordship in Scotland, found some of his ablest supporters among the Friars Preachers. William de Hotham, for instance, the English Provincial, and technically therefore Provincial for the Scots, was the author of the accepted version of Edward's claims, the *Oratio*, a tractate in French, which was considered by the King and his followers to be a masterly and convincing array of arguments.⁴ Archbishop Greenfield wrote in 1315 to the Prior of the Black Friars at York a letter on the "horrible crimes" committed by Robert de Brus and the Scots, and asked the Prior to send his friars to preach against them. He further specially ordered the Prior of Yarm with all speed to preach the word of God publicly in the Dominican Churches, having called the people together for the purpose, against the Scots, the enemies of God and the Church.⁵ On the other hand the Scottish Friars with indeed the rest of the Scottish clergy seem to have been good patriots. After the disastrous battle of Halidon Hill, the Black Friars of Berwick seem to have displayed in their sermons such intense animosity towards their English conquerors that Edward III ordered them to be taken and distributed one by one among the English priories south of the Trent, "so that with your kind treatment of them the cause of their maligning will cease and overcome by this manifestation of your brotherly affection they will learn to love these whom they now hate."⁶ As a result of these animosities,

¹ *Liber Collegii Nostre Dominine*, etc., p. xxviii.

² *Ibid.*, *Muniments*, No. 2.

³ Spottiswoode, *Account of the Religious Houses of Scotland*—ed. Russell, pp. 440-444.

⁴ Bede Jarrett, *English Dominicans*, p. 61.

⁵ Formoy, Beryl E. R., *The Dominican Order in England before the Reformation*,

p. 57-

⁶ *Rotuli Scocie*, i, 258.

not unnatural, between the Black Friars of Scotland and their brethren in England the Scottish convents seem to have been placed at their own request in a special category. There is among the Denmyln MSS. a letter which has been printed by Moir Bryce.¹ It is addressed by Jean des Moulins, the twentieth Master General to "the Vicar General of the Order of Friars Preachers in the realm of Scotland," and dated at Avignon, 29th September, 1349.

"Whereas it is meet to grant a willing consent to the just requests of supplicants, therefore looking favourably upon your petition, I by the tenor of these presents approve, renew, ratify and confirm all and sundry the immunities and favours bestowed upon your nation by whomsoever, Masters of the said Order, my predecessors adding thereto also—as a mark of our esteem—this privilege that your vicar who shall be for the time may assign to each common seminary of our Order a friar as a student and recall him at the good pleasure of his will."

The Constitution of the Order knows nothing of the office of Vicar General² as that title is used here, and one is tempted to draw the conclusion that this use in regard to Scotland is unique and that it signified the placing of the Scottish convents directly under the Master General and outwith the jurisdiction of the English Provincial in much the same way as the Holy See had already freed the Scottish Church from the claims of Canterbury and York and constituted her the "special daughter" of Rome. But be that as it may. This much is certain that by the beginning of the century the title "Vicar General" was in regular and official use among the Scottish Dominicans. Finlay de Albania, in a charter of 30th August, 1409, describes himself as "*vicarius generalis ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum in regno Scocie*,"³ and thereafter it occurs frequently. It was not, however, until some time later that Scotland was formally elevated to be a Province of the Order with a Provincial Prior of its own and the right to send representatives to the General Chapter.

This final separation from the English Province was achieved largely by the perseverance and ingenuity of one man, Friar John Mure. We find him first in the convent at Glasgow where his name appears in two deeds of 1468 as prior.⁴ From 1474 to 1479 he is in the Edinburgh convent, and there described as Vicar General.⁵ He was confessor to the King,

¹ Moir Bryce, W., "*Blackfriars of Edinburgh*." App. IV.

² Galbraith, G. R., *The Constitution of the Dominican Order* (Manchester, 1925).

³ *Mun. Frat. Pred. de Ave*, p. 43.

⁴ *Liber Nostre Domine*, 36, 37.

⁵ *Exchequer Rolls*, Vol. VIII, p. 640.

James III, and is described as "*sacre theologie baclaurium*."¹ This was how he set about it. The houses of the Black Friars were apparently not sufficiently numerous or strong enough to warrant a petition for their elevation into a separate Province. But at St. Monans in Fife there were two chaplaincies which had been established and endowed by King David II.² Mure now persuaded the King, with whom he seems to have enjoyed a certain favour,³ to permit the establishment of a house of Dominicans at St. Monans and to transfer to it the endowments of these two chaplaincies. In 1472 we find in the account of John Tarvart, customar of Cupar, notice of payment of £8 - 6 - 2 to the Friars Preachers of St. Monans, "*percipientibus annuatim viginti marcas de dictis custumis ex elemosina regis antiqua concessas duobus capellanis celebrantibus ibidem, que fundacio per dominum regem modernum conversa est in dictos Fratres*."⁴ The two chaplains were probably old and pensioned off, for five years later, in 1477, we find the same John Tarvart still paying them twenty merks.⁵ And so according to the ancient chronicler Mure achieved his purpose and became "thairefter first Provincial of Scotland be reason that St. Monans maid out the thairteenth place whereby there was an province to mak ane Provincial of Scotland, '*et hoc renitentibus Anglis*.'" ⁶ In 1481 the General Chapter of the Order, held at Rome, confirmed the new status.⁷

For the next twenty years or more there is nothing of moment to record. Though the Scottish convents now formed a Province with the right to send diffinitores to the General Chapter, there are very few references to Scotland in the *Acta* of the General Chapters, and none at all for this period. Moreover there is no evidence of any *Acta* for the Scottish Provincial Chapter. We have the names of some Priors and at least one Provincial, Friar David Anderson, but they are just names.⁸ However, shortly after the beginning of the century a strong figure begins to emerge in the person of Friar John Ade, or Adam or Adamson. We meet him first as Prior of the convent at Aberdeen in 1502, when he acknowledges receipt of certain rents from the baillies of that city.⁹ He

¹ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, ii, 1164.

² *Ibid.*, i, 304.

³ In 1474 the King made a grant to the Blackfriars of Edinburgh of 24 merks from the lands of Gosford "*pro delectione speciali quam habuit ad eandam ecclesiam et pro singulari favore quem gessit erga dilectam oratorem et confessorem suum Fratrem Johannem Mure*."—*Reg. Mag. Sig.*, ii, 1164.

⁴ *Exch. Rolls*, VIII, p. 195, 258, 317, 384, 626.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

⁶ *Liber Nostre Domine*, LIII, quoting "*Extracta e Variis Cronicis*."

⁷ Reichert, Fr. Benedictus Maria, "*Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinum Praedicatorum* (5 vols. Romae, 1898-1901), Vol. III, p. 369.

⁸ Milne, R., "*Blackfriars of Perth*" gives also John Smythe as Provincial in 1490, and Ninian Schanks, 1497. p. xxxiv.

⁹ *Exch. Rolls*, vol. 12, p. 104.

was, it would seem, already well esteemed as a man of learning and an able teacher. The Abbot of Kynloss, Thomas Chrystal, sent his young Cistercians to him to be instructed in theology; "*erat tum temporis in eo loco vir pius Frater Joannes Adami, Dominicani Ordinis in Scotia primus et theologiae scholasticae doctor insignis.*"¹ Hector Boece numbers him among the famous men of the newly founded University of Aberdeen, describing him as "professor of divinity, a man of rare piety and learning who was the first in Aberdeen to reach in that faculty the crowning honour of master."² Adam or Adamson remained Prior of the Convent at Aberdeen until 1511 when he was succeeded by John Grierson,³ and it was shortly after this that he became Provincial.

In 1518 the General Chapter of the Order met at Rome under the Mastership of Garcia de Loaysa.⁴ It was much concerned for the state of religion in general and it aimed at certain reforms within the Order. These words from the preface are significant: "*Reformationi ordinis operam dare volentes cum effectu mandamus prioribus provincialibus,*" followed by a number of detailed regulations to ensure stricter discipline. The Scottish Provincial attended this Chapter. He is given as Joanne Cude, but that is clearly a scribe's mistake for Ade, and we know that John Adamson, or Ade as he is sometimes written, was Provincial of the Scottish Province at this time. He was accompanied by John Spens as diffinitor. Spens was Prior of Edinburgh. These notices in themselves would be sufficiently interesting as practically the only indisputable instances of Scottish representatives at the General Chapter, but much more interesting is the mention a little further on of a reformation effected by Adamson himself in Scotland:

*"Approbamus reformationem in provincia Scocie a reverendo eius provinciali factam et volumus eam ab omnibus illius fratribus observari."*⁵

No details are given of what constituted this reformation, and we must turn to other sources to glean what information we can. It is not very much, but it does show Friar John Adamson as sincerely concerned for the welfare of his Order and determined, by study and education, to make it an effective organ of the Church at a time when few of the clergy in Scotland could claim any such merit.

In October, 1514, Bishop Elphinstone of Aberdeen died. He left, apparently, a considerable sum of money. Whether the good bishop

¹ *Historia Abbatum de Kynlos*, p. 80.

² *Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Vitae*, p. 92.

³ *Exch. Rolls*, vol. 13, p. 499.

⁴ Reichert, "*Acta*," IV, p. 156, *et seq.*

Ibid., IV, 173.

meant any of that money to go to the Friars Preachers we do not know, but we must remember that Adamson had been an ornament of the University which the Bishop had founded, and he may have enlisted the Bishop's sympathy for his project of reform. At any rate John Hepburn, "prior of the metropolitan church of St. Andrews and, in the vacancy of the see, vicar general," wrote on the 16th of November, 1514, to Thomas Myrton, archdeacon of Aberdeen, confirming him as executor of the Bishop's will and instructing him how to dispose of the money.¹ Eighty merks were to be spent in purchasing a certain garden and teneement for the Friars Minors of Aberdeen, the rest was to go to "the religious man Friar John Adamson, Provincial of the Order of Friars Preachers, and to the Order itself for building a convent of the said Order in the University of St. Andrews"; and the Order of Friars Preachers would burden itself with a daily mass, *sine nota*, to be said in the Convent of the Order at Edinburgh, where the remains of the Bishop lay, and also a perpetual anniversary with solemn mass for his soul on the day of the death of the said Bishop.

On the 7th of July, 1515, John Adamson acknowledged receipt from Thomas Myrton of 400 merks and certain other moneys "*pro aedificatione conventus nobis in Sancto Andrea*," promising in addition to these suffrages already mentioned another anniversary in the Convent of the Preachers at St. Andrews. The next year, on the day of St. Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist, the Provincial Chapter met at the convent of the Friars in Stirling, where with consent of the diffinitores of the said Chapter, namely Vincent Tindor, prior of Stirling, Robert Lyle, bachelor in sacred letters, prior of Perth, John Grierson, also bachelor in sacred letters, prior of Aberdeen, and John Spens, similarly bachelor in sacred letters, prior of Edinburgh, it was decided to receive the money and to apply it to the building of a new convent at St. Andrews:

*"ut illic dei gratia esset futurus conventus frateum regulariter viventium et sacrarum litterarum studio iugiter insistentium ubi antea unus solus frater raro duo morabantur"*²

(that here by the grace of God there might be in future a convent of friars living according to the rules and continuously applying themselves to the study of theology where before only one friar, rarely two, dwelt).

Here Adamson shows himself to have been a faithful disciple of St. Dominic. In his campaign against the Albigenian heretics, out of which the Order arose, Dominic had quickly realised that he must have men well educated and thoroughly grounded in the doctrines of the Church

¹ *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdoniensis*, ii, p. 310-12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 313.

if the heretics were to be met on anything like even terms. He therefore laid down study as the principal means to achieve the purpose of the Order. "It is not the end of the Order" wrote one of the greatest of its Masters General, Humbert de Romans, "but it is exceedingly necessary to achieve its two-fold end, namely, preaching and the salvation of souls, for without study neither can be achieved."¹ But in Scotland, for some time at least, this counsel would seem to have been forgotten or neglected. Boece declares "that the sacred duties of the Friar Preachers were so neglected in our country as to have almost passed into contempt."² Adamson set himself to put matters right and, in order further to build up and strengthen the convent at St. Andrews, he secured, probably directly from the King, whose confessor he was, the incorporation of the houses at St. Monans and Cupar into St. Andrews and the transference of their revenues to that convent.³ But this was not all. In that Chapter General of 1518 we further read :

"We approve of the agreement entered into between the dean of Dunkeld and the reverend provincial of the province of Scotland on a foundation for five or six students in the convent of the University of St. Andrews,"⁴

and in his *Lives of the Bishops of Dunkeld* Myln writes :

"When John Adamson, professor of sacred letters, that great and enlightened provincial of the Preachers in Scotland, brought about a thorough reformation of the Order, the dean gave him great assistance. Adamson established their place at St. Andrews, whence he deservedly enjoys his title as their founder, and endowed it for the sufficient maintenance of five friars."⁵

The dean of Dunkeld was George Hepburn, the younger brother of John Hepburn, Prior of St. Andrews, whose hand we have already seen in the matter of the allocation of the moneys left by Bishop Elphinstone, and that he too should have helped Adamson is more than coincidence. It looks indeed as if Adamson had enlisted the active co-operation of John Hepburn in his project to establish a "*studium generale*" of the Order of Friars Preachers in St. Andrews, a supposition which derives further support from the evidence of what remains of the Church of the Black Friars in that city. There the Hepburn arms—gules on a chevron argent, a rose between two lions combatant—appear three times, once on a corbel above the site of the altar and again on each of the capitals

¹ Humbert de Romans *Opera*, ii, 41, quoted by Bede Jarrett.

² *Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Viae*, p. 93.

³ *Reg. Magn. Sig.*, iii, 196.

⁴ Reichert, *Acta*, iv, 173.

⁵ *Rentale Dunkeldensis*, 321.

of the vaulting shafts in the inner angles of the apsidal end. Indeed it looks as if Hepburn had meant this to be a private chapel where his body should rest upon his death.¹

In the General Chapter of 1525 we find an echo of these things :

“ We approve for the Mastership Friar James Crichton of the Province of Scotland, and we licence as Bachelors Friar Alexander Campbell, Friar Alexander Barclay, Friar Alexander Lawson, Friar James Cheuvot, Friar Francis Carpitarius, Friar John Makcap, Friar John Makderod, and Friar James Prysens of the said Province of Scotland.”²

These men had all probably studied at the “ *studium generale*,” founded by Adamson and Hepburn. But, if this reformation within the Order of Friars Preachers with its emphasis, as one would expect, upon study, was meant to help stem the rising tide of enlightened and evangelical truth, it was already too late. There is no evidence that the Order as such took any prominent part in the hunting out and condemnation of heretics. The “ Inquisitor of Heretical Pravity ” was an Austin Canon, Lawrence of Lindores. And although later, Provincial John Grierson is said to have taken an active part in the prosecution of Patrick Hamilton and Walter Myln,³ and Knox speaks of one Campbell, a Dominican, who greatly harassed Patrick Hamilton,⁴ within a few years there were to be found adherents to the new faith and even martyrs for it within the ranks of this Order. Such for instance were Friars Beveridge and Keillor who were condemned and burned at Edinburgh in 1539;⁵ Beveridge perhaps for preaching, Keillor because he was the author of a play upon the Passion of Christ in which the prelates of the Church were satirised as the Priests and the Pharisees. More fortunate was Alexander Seaton, a friar of the convent of St. Andrews. Knox says⁶ that he had “favour” and “good credit” of King James V, to whom he was confessor, and this probably spared him, long enough at least to make possible his escape to England where he became a noted preacher. Seaton’s offence was to preach against the corruption and ignorance of the clergy. “Some of them,” he wrote in his letter to King James from Berwick, “cannot read their matins who are made judges of heresy.” He also affirmed

¹ Here also should be mentioned the foundation of the convent for nuns, the Convent of St. Catherine of Sienna, founded by Lady Jane Seton in Edinburgh in 1517 (*v. Liber Conventus S. Katherine Senensis prope Edinburgum*), and the rebuilding of the place of the Friars at Montrose (*v. Acta*, iv, 173; *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iii, 113; *Act Parl. Scot.*, ii, 389).

² Reichert, “ *Acta*,” iv. 206.

³ Hay Fleming, D., “ *Register of St. Andrew’s Kirk Session*,” vol. I, p. 16 n.

⁴ Knox, J., *History*, i, 100.

⁵ *Ibid*, i, 132.

⁶ *Ibid* i, 120, *et seq.*

that Christ Jesus was the end and perfection of the Law, that there was no sin where God's law was not violated, and to satisfy for sins lay not in man's power, but "the remission thereof cometh by unfeigned repentance and by faith apprehending God the Father merciful in Jesus Christ his Son." Seaton was followed to England in 1534 by at least two other Dominicans, John MacDowell, who was Prior of Wigtown,¹ and John MacAlpin, Prior of Perth, better known as Dr. Machabaeus, the friend of Luther and Melancthon and Alesius. John Willock, who also went to England about this time, may have been a Dominican; on the other hand he may as easily have been a Franciscan. He has been described as "a friar of Ayr,"² but Knox has nothing to say on the subject. Some stayed to preach at home. John Roger for instance, who, Knox says, "had faithfully preached Christ Jesus to the comfort of many in Angus and Mearns."³ was a brother of the Perth convent.⁴ He and friar Walter Thomson were granted in May, 1543, by the magistrates and Town Council of Aberdeen 3/- a day "with ane honest chalmers" for "preching and teching of the true word of God."⁵ Before the end of the year Roger was secretly murdered in the dungeon of the sea tower at St. Andrews. Another member of the Perth convent, according to Calderwood, had no small influence upon James Wedderburn, joint author of the "Gude and Godly Ballates."⁶

"He (Wedderburn) had been brought up in Saint Leonard's Colledge in his youth . . . and was reasonable well instructed in philosophie and humanitie. Thereafter he went to France where he played the merchant. After his return he was instructed in religion by James Hewat, a Blacke frier at Dundee. He confirmed the doctrine which the other had received in his youth in St. Leonard's Colledge under Mr. Gawin Logie."

What happened to the houses of the Friars Preachers and others at the Reformation is well known. They were situated mostly in the larger centres of population where the "rascal multitude" was naturally most in evidence, and their destruction was ruthless and thorough. On 25th May, 1561, the Master General, Friar Vincent Justinian, could write to his chaplain: "Of the provinces of Bohemia, Scotland, Ireland, Greece and the Holy Land nothing is left to boast of but the name."⁷ Indeed

¹ *Exch. Rolls*, XVI, 366.

² Macewen, A. R., *History of the Church in Scotland*, i, 454.

³ Knox, J., *History*, i, 169.

⁴ Milne, R., *Blackfriars of Perth*, 226.

⁵ Hay Fleming, D., *Reformation*, 196.

⁶ Calderwood, D., *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, vol. I, p. 141-3.

⁷ Moir Bryce, W., *Blackfriars of Edinburgh*.

the organisation in Scotland collapsed very quickly. John Grierson, Provincial, wrote on 26th January, 1557-8, to the Master General a letter in which he described the state of affairs in Dundee, where the priory "recently erected . . . was more recently cast down, first by the heretics in 1543, then by the English in 1548, and seeing that town is infected with heretics, not only are there no religious contributions, but the friars are mocked, scorned and despised without any hope of amendment and even proceeding from bad to worse. Yet we have assigned thereto two friars who do not live there, but in other convents, coming and going so that religion may retain a hold on their place."¹ In 1559 Grierson transferred the property of the Order in St. Andrews to various citizens with the condition that, should the Roman Church be restored and the Friars return, the properties were to be handed back.² At Glasgow Prior Andrew Leich made a similar attempt³ to convey the lands of the convent to a burgess of Glasgow; but by a charter under the Great Seal of 1566-7, the Queen bestowed the Black Friars' place with its endowments upon the provost, bailies and council, and community for the support of the ministers of the gospel and the erection of a hospital for the poor and infirm of the city. This was confirmed and extended by a deed of James VI in the following year, but in 1572-3 the greater part of the rights which the municipal corporation had thus acquired were transferred to the University. So it was all over the country. All private arrangements to dispose of the properties of the Friars were declared null and void, and the properties were claimed by the Crown and re-allocated for social, religious and educational purposes.⁴

What happened to the Friars? Some certainly went abroad, but many remained and, having made recantation, were granted a yearly pension of £16 until their death. Moir Bryce says,⁵ basing his evidence upon the Accounts of the Collector General and Sub-Collectors, 1561-8, "All that can be said with certainty is that at least thirty-five Black Friars did remain and were each awarded the usual yearly pension . . . in this list, in addition to the Provincial, there appear the names of no fewer than six of the Priors, Friars Bernard Stewart of Edinburgh, William Henderson of Stirling, Andrew Abercromby of Aberdeen, David Cameron of Perth, Francis Wright of Elgin (or Inverness) and James Dodds of Wigtown."

¹ Moir Bryce, W., *Blackfriars of Edinburgh*, 73 and note.

² Hay Fleming, D., *Register of St. Andrew's Kirk Session*, vol. i, p. 16, note.

³ *Liber Collegii Nostre Domine*.

⁴ *Reg. Privy Co.*, i, 202, 478; *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iv, 1782, 2075.

⁵ *Blackfriars of Edinburgh*, 74.

For the life of the Friars generally, and for a just estimate of their place and influence in the social life of the country the sources are very meagre indeed. It was laid down in their Constitutions that the General and the Provincial Chapters should keep records, *Acta* they were called, containing not their discussions, but their final decisions and enactments, and these for the General Chapters, with one or two exceptions in the very early years, exist and have been published; but of the Provincial Chapters very few, and of the English and Scottish Provinces none seem to have survived.¹ Moreover, with regard to the three main sources laid down by Coulten for such an enquiry as this,² their own words, the reports of official visitors, the judgments of contemporaries, we are, in Scotland at least, in much the same position. They do not appear to exist. However, some records belonging to the Friars Preachers have survived; those of the priories at Glasgow, Perth and Ayr, and Moir Bryce declares³ that the charters belonging to the Inverness priory were in existence as late as the XVIIIth century, while an official transcript of the Elgin Charter is in the National Library. The same writer affirms that Friar Abercromby of Aberdeen carried off the records of his priory, and we know that those belonging to St. Andrews⁴ were stolen and destroyed before the Reformation. The Ayr, Perth and Glasgow muniments have been published, and in Aberdeen a précis has been made of the materials in the charter rooms of Marischal College and the Burgh of Aberdeen.⁵ These are all composed of, or concerned with, deeds and charters pertaining to lands, rents and other dues. They contain little that is helpful in building up a picture of life within a priory or in assessing the extent to which the Constitutions and enactments of the Order were observed and carried out by its representatives in Scotland. Nothing, for instance, is to be gleaned from them regarding study or preaching, the two main activities of the Dominicans. What we know about that has to be gleaned from other sources, and these gleanings are such only as to whet the appetite, but never to satisfy it. Myln, for example, tells us that George Brown, Bishop of Dunkeld, arranged that Friars Minors and Friars Preachers, well acquainted with the Irish tongue, should preach at least once a year in the upper part of his diocese and hear confession, and "By the preaching of these men parishioners and inhabitants of the diocese were led to confess and obtain absolution for sins concealed during thirty years."⁶ "Our Order, wrote Humbert de Romans, "was instituted principally for preaching and for the salvation of souls,"⁷

¹ Galbraith, G. R. Constitution, 2.

² Coulton, G. C., *Five Centuries of Religion*, ii, 239.

³ *Blackfriars of Edinburgh*, 7.

⁵ P. J. Anderson, *Aberdeen Friars*.

⁷ Formoy, *The Dom. Ord. in Eng.*, 37.

⁴ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iii, 2964.

⁶ *Rentale Dunkeldensis*, 304-5.

and we can but assume that it fulfilled in some measure at least that purpose in Scotland. We have no record of a sermon. Milne in his *Blackfriars of Perth* quotes a remark: "Ah these Blackfriars are your men for the pulpit . . . if you want a discourse that will keep you quaking for a week go to the Church of the Dominicans,"¹ but he claims no historical authority for it. The *Summa Predicantium* of Friar. John Bromyard, however, affords some indication of the materials and methods commonly in use and, though the work of an English friar, it was probably known and used north of the Border. The book was one of the best known and most important of those summaries for preachers in vogue in the later Middle Ages. The chapters are arranged alphabetically according to subject and show the orthodox stock in trade of the Dominican preacher put together in encyclopaedia form by one of the scholars of the Order. Chapter XVIII on "*Adversitas*," for example, opens thus: "*Adversitas est duplex. Una intrinseca seu spiritualis, alia extrinseca seu corporalis. Prima est periculosa, secunda fructuosa. Primam debemus timere, in secunda sperare.*"² Each Province was required to appoint a Preacher General who could go anywhere within the Province, and each Convent a Preacher in Ordinary who had a strictly limited area of preaching and was accompanied by a "*socius*" another friar of the same convent. Preaching and begging were not to go together.³

With regard to poverty; when the Order was confirmed by Pope Honorius III in 1216, it was as an Order of Canons Regular holding property, and it was only as a result of the vivid impression made upon the minds of St. Dominic's followers by the great advances of the Franciscans that this right to hold property was surrendered and poverty embraced at the General Chapter of 1220.⁴ Dominic himself always held that property, rightly used and administered, could be a help in furthering his twin ideals of preaching and study. Thus when, at a later period in their history, the Order of Friars Preachers were allowed to hold property in common, they were but returning to their original position. They never held anything like the great monasteries and abbeys. They held no churches, for instance; mostly it was rents and feu duties, a few multures here and there and some fishing rights. They owned the land upon which their convents stood and sometimes a little round about crofts which they farmed themselves—or rather which the *conversi* farmed for them. St. Dominic never subscribed to the current monastic conception that it was necessary for the good of the monk or the friar himself that he should do so much manual work each day.⁵ These rents and properties provided them with their revenue, but they were not rich.

¹ *Op. cit.*, xxxiii.

² Formoy, *Dom. Ord. in Eng.* 101.

³ Galbraith, G. R., *Constitution*, 164-8. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 179. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

Among the documents of the Perth convent which have come down to us is the account book of Prior David Cameron, from June 20, 1557, to May 5, 1559,¹ which shows that the money revenue of the convent—including burials—for the two years amounted to £272 9s. 9d. Scots, which, if we adopt the standard of values cited by Coulton² for this time, of five to one, works out at £45 8s. 3d. sterling. The pound sterling had a purchasing value then roughly twenty times its value in 1930 which puts the income for the two years at roughly £908 5s., or £454 2s. 6d. per year. Out of this sum at least fourteen friars were to be fed, housed and clothed, not to speak of the lay brethren whose numbers we have no means of judging. Admittedly this account book makes no mention of gifts in kind such as wheat, barley and oats, but even allowing for these the convent could hardly be described as wealthy.

Moreover, one cannot read through the extant records without realising that the friars had often great difficulty in securing the regular payment of their dues, and they had frequently to take legal action. A gift given in one generation was quite often withheld in the next. Even before the Reformation this was true and, as the authority of the old Church declined, the numbers of the defaulters increased. Some time before 1320 Sir John de Logy had granted to the Friars Preachers of Perth to be delivered annually forty cart loads of peat. Sir John was shortly afterwards executed for conspiracy and his estate forfeited to the Crown, but King Robert continued the gift to the Black Friars. It was confirmed in 1324 and an injunction issued to the sheriffs to see that the peats were delivered. In 1369 it was confirmed again by royal charter of David II which contained a similar injunction to the sheriffs of Perth that they compel it to be done "so that we shall hear no more of their (the friars') just complaint regarding your failure." In 1490 Lyon of Logy was severely censured at a Council in Edinburgh, again presumably in a suit raised by the Friars, for withholding the forty cart loads of peat "ane yier by past" and ordered to pay the peats and continue doing so on pain of distraint of lands and goods. In 1505 the matter crops up again. Margaret Logy and her husband, Thomas Hay, who then held the estates, had apparently "stoppit the payment", and the King, on the petition of the Friars, issued on the 22nd of April a warrant to the sheriff to enforce it "under payne of payment of the samyn of his ain guidis togedder with the expenses susteint by our said oratours in the said matter." In 1550 the peats still figure in a list of "duties withheld."³

¹ Milne, R., *Blackfriars of Perth*, 243-265.

² Coulton, G. C., *Scottish Abbeys and Social Life*. App. 8.

³ Milne, R., *Blackfriars of Perth*, pp. 10-15.

From Aberdeen, Glasgow and Ayr we have similar stories. The Friars Preachers of Ayr, by a charter of Alexander II, had a yearly pension of £20 from the revenues of the Burgh of Ayr. About 1386 they complained that it was not being paid regularly or in full, and it took twenty years and the intervention of the Cardinal Legate, Parliament and the King, before the matter was finally settled, in 1406, and even then it was only by a compromise arrived at between the Friars and the Town Council.¹ At Glasgow the Master of Sempille was the recipient in 1545 of a writ to pay the yearly alms of six bolls of victuals to the Friars Preachers which "has beine ay continualie and thankfulie pait and yerelie answeireit thair of till now lait of few yeris by gane."² At Aberdeen in October, 1455, the Prior, John Ochirless, and Friar Robert Sprouston, as procurator, were granted by the Burgh Court possession of a certain piece of land in the Netherkirkgate in default of the payment of the annual of 7/-.³ The Burgh Court Books, indeed, of Aberdeen, are full of notices of claims by the Friars Preachers—but not them alone—for the payment of sums due to them. In fact it would seem that much of a Prior's time was taken up in making and prosecuting such claims, and the Ayr records present us even with the picture of a Prior taking the law into his own hands and himself distraining upon the property of a delinquent.⁴ Prior Patrick Pulty went personally with notary and witnesses on 11th September, 1460, to the house of John Crawford, Laird of Kerse, to distrain the lands of Kerse for fifty shillings of yearly rent which was overdue, and, finding some cows there, proceeded at once to drive them away with him. One John McKee, however, a servant of the Laird, saw him and forcibly took the cows back. The Prior did not get his rent.

We have already seen that St. Dominic laid great stress upon study, and, in the Constitutions of the Order, elaborate provisions were made to fulfil his purpose. The plan of Dominican studies was briefly as follows. Preliminary instruction in the grammar schools was pre-supposed before a novice was accepted. Each Dominican convent had a doctor within its walls who gave lectures which all the friars had to attend. Outsiders might be admitted to these lectures. In the larger convents or in groups of smaller convents were "studia sollemnia." These "studia" might be "studia artium" or "studia naturalium." After two or three years at an art school a friar with a good report might pass to a "studium naturalium" to learn natural philosophy or science. The last educational

¹ *Mun. Frat. Pred. de Ayr*, Nos. 1-27.

² *Liber Coll. Nost. Dom*, Nos. 70, 71.

³ *Aberdeen Burgh Court Books*, vol. v, p. 245, in P. J. Anderson, *Aberdeen Friars*.

⁴ *Mun. Frat. Pred. de Ayr*, No. 34.

stage was the "studium generale" established in certain universities of Europe. These were conducted by a master or regent and two bachelors.¹

How far this scheme was ever carried out in Scotland we are unable to say. It is fair to assume that some attempt was made. In the early fifteenth century we hear of one Hugh Kennedy, nephew to the celebrated Bishop Kennedy, being sent to the Dominicans at Ayr to be taught grammar;² and in 1375 there is mention of a "lector" in the convent at Perth.³ But it is not until the time of John Mure and later that we get any very definite evidence that the Scottish Dominicans were men of learning. Mure, as we have seen, was a bachelor of theology, and in 1470 he was incorporated in the University of Glasgow.⁴ He was not the first. In 1457 three Dominicans, Patrick Sharp, John Symson and Andrew Hasting appear among the names of those incorporated, and in 1487 David Crag, 1519 Robert Lyle, 1529 Alexander Barclay and John McDowell, and in 1532 George Crechtoun. Indeed the close relationship between the universities and the Order, so conspicuous a mark of its continental history, is in Scotland at least until 1516, most clearly evident at Glasgow. The conventual buildings practically housed the University, at least all its larger meetings, and at least one Dominican scholar lectured there. The annals of the University record that "on the twenty fourth of March, 1521-2, within the place of the Black Friars in presence of the Rector, Dean of Faculty and other masters of the college, and under the presidency of a venerable Father, Friar John Adamson, doctor of theology and Provincial of the Friars Preachers in Scotland, Friar Robert Lile, bachelor in divinity, Prior of the convent of Glasgow, began the exposition of the fourth book of the Sentences."

In the English Province Oxford first and later Cambridge were officially designated "studia generale." It was not until 1518, as we have seen, that Scotland had its own "studium generale" at St. Andrews. It is probable that Friar John Grierson was regent of it. He is described in a deed of 1542 as "sacre theologic professor," and⁵ by virtue of his office as Provincial of the Order, he had a say in the nomination of professors in the New College of St. Mary's.⁶

¹ Formoy, *Dom. Ord. in Eng.*, 91-2.

² Coulton, G. C., *Scottish Abbeys and Social Life*, 234.

³ Milne, R., *Blackfriars of Perth*, No. xxi.

⁴ *Annales Universitatis Glasguensis*.

⁵ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, iii, 2695.

⁶ *Reg. Privy Coun.*, ii, 561.