

BISHOP CLEMENT OF DUNBLANE, O. P.

MATTHEW PARIS, writing of the last expedition of Alexander II, king of Scots, said that it was reported to be due to "the constant urging of a certain indiscreet bishop of Strathearn, a friar, of a truth, of the Order of Preachers". (Chron. Maj., V. p. 89; Rolls Ser.) This indiscreet bishop was Clement of Dunblane, with whom the history of the Dominican Order in Scotland begins. Apart from the words of Matthew Paris, there appears to be nothing written about him which is not laudatory, and since the 17th century at least he has commonly been referred to by Scottish writers, whether Catholic or Protestant, as "Saint Clement", although there has never been any authorisation of cultus. The title is probably due solely to Camerarius, who assigned Bishop Clement a place in his calendar of Scottish saints, under the date March 19th. But before that time warm praise was given to Clement, though not the name of saint, both by mediæval Scottish writers and by chroniclers of his own order; and it is safe to say that no Scottish Dominican has left so great a memory, and few others are so deserving of remembrance.

After studying at Paris, where he is said to have received the habit from St. Dominic himself according to one account, from Matthew of France according to another, Clement was chosen to lead a group of friars being sent to Scotland in answer to an invitation from Alexander II. There was a tradition, according to no higher authority than Boece, which said that the King and St. Dominic had met and arranged the matter personally, but although this was no doubt a fine thing to assert against the greater English Province there is no evidence to support it. Both the king and William Malvoisin, the Bishop of St. Andrews, were, however, acquainted with the work of the Blackfriars in England and on the continent, and Clement and his brethren were welcomed by them warmly. Helped by royal and episcopal favour, expansion was rapid. In several instances, most notably in Perth and Edinburgh, the friars were settled in houses belonging to the king. Between 1230-33, approximately, foundations were made in Berwick, Ayr, Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen, Elgin and Inverness. Others were to follow before the century was out, but these, with the addition of Glasgow, which was established at the invitation of the bishop and chapter in the next decade, and St. Andrews, founded by the bishop in 1274, were to remain the most important Dominican houses in Scotland until the Reformation—although Berwick was even-

tually to become English. In all this pioneering work Brother Clement was the leading figure, subject to the authority of the English Provincial who then, and for at least a century, as far as has been ascertained as yet, ruled the Scottish houses through a Vicar-General. But in 1233 an end was put to Clement's preoccupation with exclusively Dominican affairs, by his being made Bishop of Dunblane. The Melrose Chronicle recorded the event: "The canon Clement, one of the order of the Friars Preachers, was elected to the bishopric of Dunblain, and was consecrated by William, bishop of St. Andrews, on the day of the translation of St. Cuthbert (4th Sept.) at Wedale". (Trans. in Eng. Church Historians, IV. pt. 1. p. 177).

This was certainly recognition of his gifts. Dunblane was a problem, and it was given to Clement to try to solve. For a considerable time the diocese had been neglected, and for many years was actually without a bishop. It was at best a poor see, but as a result of steady alienation of property it was impoverished to such a degree that there was doubt as to whether it could survive. Of its revenues much was in the hands of powerful barons, such as the Earl of Menteith, and much in the possession of religious houses such as Inchaffray, Lindores and the great Abbey of Arbroath. The building of the cathedral church, begun in the previous century, made little progress. Clement described it as roofless, in a report to Rome. He had, he told the Pope, no place to lay his head; there was no chapter, and but one rural chaplain who officiated about three times a week in the unfinished church. The income remaining to the diocese was insufficient to keep the bishop for six months. The Holy See decided that if this state of things could not be mended, the see was to be transferred to the Canons Regular of St. John, at Inchaffray, who would have for the future the right of electing bishops. Clement began the attempt to restore the diocesan finances, with papal authority to collect a quarter of the tithes of all parish churches within the diocese if, in the opinion of two bishops appointed by the Pope to examine the matter, it could be done without grave scandal. This necessarily entailed action against the earls and Abbots who had acquired rights over these tithes, but by 1240, after a series of arbitrations, a better income had been secured for the bishop and for a reconstituted chapter. Bishop Clement's successor was to complain that the income was still insufficient for the fitting support of a bishop, but it appears to have maintained the friar bishop, and to have allowed him to renew work on the cathedral and to carry it on steadily. Exactly how much of the very beautiful church was due to him it is difficult to say. Building was to continue for long after his death, but the

greater part of the cathedral is thought to date from his episcopate and he is generally regarded as deserving the title of builder.

So by about 1240 Bishop Clement had achieved not only the firm establishment of his order in Scotland, but the restoration of a diocese. His work for his brethren and for his diocese was not finished, but in the remaining years of his life he had wider tasks given to him. William, Bishop of Argyll, had been drowned in 1241, and that see remained vacant until 1250. During these years it appears to have been administered by the Bishop of Dunblane. There were ecclesiastical and political troubles in Argyll at that time, so again Clement had no easy work given him. With the Bishop of Glasgow, he was authorised by the Pope to transfer the see of Argyll from the island of Lismore to some more secure and accessible place, the king having offered to contribute to the expenses. The latter was at that time making new efforts to regain the Western Isles for the Scottish kingdom. Whatever the truth of Matthew Paris's ideas on the justice of Alexander's campaign in 1249, he was probably right in attributing considerable influence in the affair to Clement, who was not only a friend and councillor of the king but also directly interested in the state of the islands.

About the same date, in 1247, Bishop Clement was appointed by the Pope, collector of the subsidy for the crusade, the preaching of which had been begun the year before; and a mandate was issued commanding all other prelates in Scotland to enforce any orders that the Bishop of Dunblane might issue for the collection of the Holy Land subsidy. As in other parts of Europe, so in Scotland the Blackfriars were active in support of the crusade. The name of one in particular has been preserved—Bro. Ivo of Ayr—because the funds which he left, some years after this time, in the care of the Premonstratensians of Withorn, were seized by the latter's superior with the support, it appears, of the community; and much vigorous business followed in the effort to recover the money, with beating of a Legate's messenger and consequent excommunication of the monks. All of which suggests that when the Bishop of Dunblane was made collector he was once again recognized by being given heavy responsibility. The heaviest was still to come.

In many ways 1250 was a year in which Bishop Clement could look back with satisfaction on a large amount of work successfully accomplished. Since his coming to Scotland in 1230 the religious life of the country had grown in strength, helped by the preaching of his own and other orders of friars. There had been wise legislation to remove abuses. There was an outstanding improvement in liturgical observance, in which a large part is believed to have been played by one of the Bishop's original companions, Friar Simon

Taylor, who is said to have been the first Prior of Edinburgh and to have written—although we have only Dempster's authority for this—works "De cantu ecclesiastico corrigendo" and "De tenore musicali". The greater part of Dunblane Cathedral was probably built by 1250. In Glasgow the building of the great church of the Blackfriars was well under way. A bishop had been at last elected for Argyll. In London a General Chapter of the Order granted the Bishop unusual recognition by resolving that when he died each priest in the Order should say Mass for him; an ordination which, as Quétif and Echard have remarked, witnesses to the affection with which he had cared for his brethren even when made a bishop, and to the high respect in which the whole Order held him. His position in the country was also high, as a friend of the late king (Alexander II died in 1249), and one of the council of regents who governed for the eight year old king, Alexander III.

In the latter capacity he was to play an important part in the remaining years of his life. On Alexander II's death the English king, Henry III, began various attempts to win feudal overlordship of Scotland. A request that the Pope should declare the Scots king his feudal inferior was refused. An effort to persuade Alexander to do homage for his kingdom in 1251, when he was married to Henry's daughter at York, also failed. Henry's envoys in Scotland found determined opposition among the regents, among whom the bishops of Glasgow and Dunblane were notable, and set about building a pro-English party, headed by the High Justiciar, Alan Durward. In 1255 the latter seized the king and queen. Henry was at hand on the borders to give help if necessary, and met the rebels at Roxburgh. In Kelso an agreement was made by which Henry was recognised as the king of Scotland's *Principal Counsellor*; the former regents were removed from office, and a new council was set up, the names of whose members had already appeared in a report by Henry's envoys on the success of their bid for support among the Scottish nobles.

The bishops in the national party were to prove the undoing of the Durward group. The bishop-elect of St. Andrews, Gamelin, had been among those who refused to sign the Kelso agreement, and an effort was made in consequence to prevent his consecration. This failed, and he was then declared outlaw. He left the country, to take an account of what was happening to Rome. In his absence the revenues of his see were appropriated, and charges prepared with a view to inducing the Pope to remove him. But at Rome the messengers of the English party lost their case. Gamelin was cleared of the accusations brought against him and Bishop Clement, with the Abbots of Melrose and Jedburgh, was instructed

to excommunicate his accusers, in the first instance in general terms and then, if they persisted in their hostility, by name. Somewhere about the close of 1257 the councillors of the Durward party were excommunicated by the bishop and the two abbots in Cambuskenneth Abbey. The bishop of St. Andrews was on his way home, and was soon to arrive, having escaped efforts to intercept him set on foot by Henry. On the grounds that excommunicated persons were unfit advisers for a king, and were exposing the nation to danger of an interdict, the national party followed Clement's action with a successful attempt to capture the king. The leaders of the English party fled across the Border, leaving the original regents securely in power. The excommunication in Cambuskenneth Abbey is the last act of Clement of which we have any record. In the following year, 1258, he was dead.

He had been outstanding as a religious, as a bishop, and as a statesman; a lover of his order and of his country. What the members of his order thought of him was shown in 1250. A series of commissions from Rome showed how much he was trusted by the Pope. He was usually given difficult work, of a kind requiring energy, tact and foresight. Of his private life we know nothing, but it is surely reasonable to suppose from what we know of Dunblane then and later that in material things it must have been marked by great simplicity, if not austerity. What evidence there is suggests that he governed his diocese well and justly, giving the chapter its proper place. That he was zealous for the worship of God is evident not only from his care for the beauty of the cathedral, which has won him so great praise, but from his care for its proper service. He is said to have been a man of great eloquence, skilled in many tongues; and it needs no wild conjecture to say that he was in all likelihood fluent in Gaelic, Latin, French and English—at least of the Lothians. Dempster attributes four books to him; a volume of sermons, a life of St. Dominic, an account of the coming of the Dominicans to Scotland, and a book on journeying to the holy places. None of these, if they ever existed, is now known; but there is in a 13th century collection of sermons in the British Museum one which is ascribed to Brother Clement. In the choir of Dunblane Cathedral is the Bishop's tomb, with his effigy, and there in 1933 the Protestant body now in possession commemorated the 700th anniversary of his coming to Dunblane, with a special service and an address by the Presbyterian minister—"a commemorative service in honour of St. Clement." ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.