

Patrick Primrose: A Dominican in Seventeenth-century Scotland

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In August 1670 the Privy Council in Edinburgh considered reports that 'Mr Patrick Primrose' had been 'used to say messe' in 'the house of Kinnairdie in the paroch of Aberchardour, within the shyre of Banff'. Indeed, 'there is usuall resort publickly to masse every Lords day'; 'four families of the heretours in the said paroch doe upon ringing of the bell goe to a rounge in the said house where there is ane altar erected and preists doe officiat'. When the sheriff of Aberdeen had verified that Mass was being said, he was 'to make inqurie for the preist' and 'to apprehend and committ him to prison, and to seize upon any vestments or other popish ornaments made use of in their superstitious worship and service'. In November the Council discussed the priest's capture; he was by then in the tolbooth¹ of Banff. On 22 December, having been informed that he was a chaplain to the Queen, Catherine of Braganza, they set him free, on condition that he went into exile, never to return, 'under the payne of death', without permission of the King or the Council².

Early in January 1671, being evidently too frail to travel, he was allowed to stay in Scotland until 5 February. On 4 March 1672, the sheriff of Aberdeen was instructed to back the bishop and clergy in their efforts to root out popery and quakerism, this to include demolishing the 'superstitious monument erected upon the grave of the deceast Mr Patrick Primrose'³. His remains had been buried by the chapel of St Peter, beside the River Deveron, a few miles west of Huntly (the rickle of overgrown stones fenced off in a field is an Ancient Monument).

Given that a parliament, held in Edinburgh in August 1560, proscribed the Catholic Mass, repudiated the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, etc., it is perhaps surprising to hear of a house, more than a century later, in which Mass was being celebrated every Sunday.

In 1972 Fr Anthony Ross OP set out what was known about Fr Patrick Primrose, through whom the Order of Preachers attempted, unsuccessfully as it turned out, to revive its mission in Scotland⁴. More detail can now be filled in, with something about the background and people he must have known.

The Reformation in Scotland

The Reformation came late in Scotland. Martin Luther was tried (in his absence) in Rome on charges of heresy in 1518 ; later that year he had his fruitless encounter with Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg. John Calvin resigned his ecclesiastical benefices in 1534, leaving Paris for Switzerland. In 1534 the Supremacy Act declared Henry VIII 'supreme head' of the English Church, and a Treasons Act forbade denial of the royal supremacy. In 1536 the Pilgrimage of Grace failed.

In Scotland, by this time, a dozen men had been burned to death for heresy — Patrick Hamilton (1504-28) the first, regarded as dangerous because of his family connections. Five were burned in Edinburgh in 1539, including two Dominican friars (Beveridge and Kyllour). Yet the sporadic attacks on religious houses in towns like Perth and Dundee remained exceptional. That a mob sacked the Dominican priory in Dundee in 1543, carrying off chalices, vestments and the blessed sacrament, may support the charge at the time that 'ane greit heresie' raged in the town; but no action was taken until ten years later. An attack on the Edinburgh Blackfriars was thwarted by the burgesses. The Dominicans were resented for their wealth. George Wishart (c. 1513-1546) returned from Louvain and Cambridge, preaching Calvinist doctrine; soon arrested, he was burned at St Andrews. Cardinal David Beaton (?1494-1546), by far the most important church leader and statesman, never interested in church reform and totally committed to the Franco-Scottish alliance, was murdered within weeks, in revenge for Wishart's death; but chiefly for political reasons, at the behest ultimately of King Henry VIII of England (Beaton denounced 'the whole pollution and plague of Anglican impiety').

The Council of Trent at last opened in 1545, after years of papal resistance (except for the year of the Dutch pope, Hadrian VI, 1522-23). For decades, lay and church leaders pressed for a council of the Church and often actually engaged in promoting what might have been a 'Catholic reform' — nowhere more than in the North East Lowlands of Scotland. William Elphinstone (1431-1514), bishop of Aberdeen since 1483, strove to reform the diocese from above, so to speak: consider the heraldic ceiling of St Machar's cathedral, the Aberdeen Breviary, the foundation of the University, and much else, including his encouragement of the Dominicans⁵. John Adamson, the first doctor of divinity at the new university, appointed Prior Provincial in 1511 by Cajetan, Master of the Order, to retrieve the scandalous situation created by his predecessor, David Anderson, proved such a thoroughgoing reformer that some of the more easy-going friars fled to priories in England⁶.

On the standard view, still widely believed, an utterly corrupt pre-

Reformation Catholic Church was repudiated overnight by a people longing for truly evangelical preaching. As recent scholarship shows, however, the Reformation was instigated for political reasons and it took a century for Calvinism to establish itself.

By 1558, the year that Mary Queen of Scots was married to the Dauphin, the principal objective of the Scots nobility was to end French influence in Scotland⁷. Unwilling to appear simply as rebels against their Queen, they invited the exiled John Knox to return, so that they could adopt a theological justification for their rebellion under the guise of 'Lords of the Congregation of Christ Jesus'.

John Knox, then aged about 44, ordained priest in 1536, was converted to Protestantism by Thomas Guilliame (Gilyem, Gwilliam), formerly a Dominican friar; and inducted as a minister in 1547 by John Rough, another ex-Dominican⁸. Knox had been in England since 1549. A chaplain to Edward VI, he took part in revising the Book of Common Prayer and appears to be chiefly responsible for inserting the 'Black Rubric', against kneeling at communion. He refused the offer of the bishopric of Rochester; we don't know why. During Mary Tudor's savage reign he moved to Geneva, eventually at Calvin's urging to the English congregation in Frankfurt. His remarkable book, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), arguing that female sovereignty contravened natural and divine law, proved just what the insurgent noblemen wished to hear⁹.

The Lords of the Congregation commissioned Knox to draw up a Book of Discipline to present to parliament. Dissatisfied with the section on their own role as godly magistrates, they sent it back to him, being unwilling to accede to the demands of the reformed Church for sufficient revenues to finance the wide ranging programme set out by Knox¹⁰.

The principal instigator of the Reformation in Scotland was Lord James Stewart (1531-70). Illegitimate son of King James V, installed at the age of seven as Commendator of the Augustinian priory of St Andrews, created earl of Moray by his half sister Mary Queen of Scots, he almost certainly knew of the plot to murder David Rizzio (or Riccio), her 33 year old Savoyard secretary. He became Regent in 1567 during the infancy of James VI, but was assassinated in 1570 by a supporter of Mary who escaped to France¹¹. Lord James commissioned David Peebles, an Augustinian at St Andrews, to harmonize the 105 tunes of the new metrical psalter¹². Knox, by then minister of St Giles in Edinburgh, preached at his funeral.

Interestingly, in Aberdeen, the Reformation, when it came, was not received easily. In 1560 a posse of reformers were prevented from wrecking the Cathedral by the arrival of the Catholic earl of Huntly and

his troops. In 1568 the Regent Moray gave orders to strip the lead from the Cathedral roof. Principal Alexander Anderson is credited with stopping the mob from doing the same to King's College chapel roof. The local people refused to take part in desecrating the Cathedral. En route for Holland, where the lead and the bells were to be sold, the overloaded ship sank with all hands, including the merchant who organized the work, at Girdle Ness, just outside the harbour.

In 1569 the Lords of the Congregation and the General Assembly had to 'purge' the University of Aberdeen: Principal Anderson and many of his colleagues refused to subscribe to the Scots Confession and were deprived of their posts. Anderson died in 1577, 'excommunicatt contrayr the religione and at the kyngis horne' (outlawed by royal proclamation).¹³.

The Primrose family

Patrick Primrose was baptised in Edinburgh on 27 February 1614, third son of David Primrose, a lawyer in Edinburgh, and his wife Marion Purdie, widow of a merchant William Marjoribanks.

In 1631 he donated two books to the library of the University of Edinburgh, where they still are¹⁴. One, the Commentary *De Nobilitate et Iure Primigeniorum* by André Tiraqueau, published at Paris in 1549, bears the name or signature of a certain Joannes Marjoribanks, an Edinburgh lawyer.

This is the kind of book that might interest a scion of the gentry (but the Primrose family were only lawyers and civil servants at this point) or belong to the library of a genealogist. In fact we are in the world of heraldry. John Purdy, appointed Clerk of the Lyon Court in 1587 had a daughter Marion, who married William Marjoribanks, burgess of Edinburgh, in 1596. This is Patrick Primrose's mother. Presumably she brought the book with her when she married Marjoribanks. Perhaps he was already interested in genealogy; perhaps how he met John Purdy's daughter.

We know a good deal about David Primrose, Patrick's father. He graduated at the University of Edinburgh in 1602, was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates on 30 May 1609, married Marion Purdie or Marjoribanks on 5 June 1608, and died in 1651. He appeared in many legal actions, in particular for the defence in the trial of Isobel Young for witchcraft in 1629 but lost the case: she was convicted, taken to the Castle hill of Edinburgh, 'thair to be wirreit at ane stake quhill scho be deid and thairefter hir body to be brunt in ashes'¹⁵. He also published three pamphlets: *An apologie for advocates. Declaring the dignitie, merites, and necessitie of their calling*, printed by J. Wreiton, Edinburgh, 1628 (of which the only known perfect copy is in the Rosebery library at

Barnbogle); *Scotland's Complaint upon the Death of our late Sovereigne King James, of most happy memorie*, 1625, again printed by Jon Wreiton; and in 1633 *Scotlands welcome to her dread soveraigne K. Charles*, in a volume issued by the 'Edinburgh muses' for the occasion, republished separately in 1635. The sycophantic rhetoric belongs to a certain genre and tells us nothing about the author's character.

The first son Archibald, born in 1609, died young. There were two daughters, Margaret in 1610 and Janet in 1611, a son James in 1613, Patrick in 1614 and Euphame in 1616.

It is difficult to see why Marion's child-bearing ceased, unless she was either greatly debilitated or dead. If she died in childbirth or fairly soon after 1616, one wonders why David, who was probably only in his late thirties, waited twenty years before remarrying. He was certainly married by 1638 to Margaret Forrester who died, if not in childbirth, then certainly before their son David was christened that year. The likeliest story is that Patrick's mother lived well into the 1630s, a sick woman. She might have seen him leave Edinburgh for the Continent in order to become a Catholic. His father lived long enough to hear of his being a Dominican friar and expecting to return to Scotland.

Whether Patrick Primrose was brought up in a 'crypto-catholic environment', as Ross suggests, is debatable. The family was certainly not Calvinist in its sympathies. Patrick no doubt attended the High School, in Blackfriars Wynd, happily enough, a building erected in 1578 that lasted until Walter Scott's day, on the site of the quite recently abandoned Dominican priory. On the other hand, the second book which Patrick gave to the University — *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae*, by Nicholas Sanders, published at Louvain in 1571— is a strenuous defence of the authority of Pope Pius V to excommunicate and depose Queen Elizabeth of England; it includes the earliest narrative of the persecution of Catholics in England.

It is unlikely that young Primrose knew much about the author. Nicholas Sanders (c1530-1581), educated at Winchester and New College Oxford, where he taught canon law, fled to the Continent when Elizabeth came to the throne, got ordained in Rome in 1560, accompanied the Polish Cardinal Stanislaus Hozjusz (Hosius) to Trent in 1561 and on other missions; taught theology in Louvain, where he involved himself in controversy with the leading theologian of the Anglican settlement, John Jewel; became Pope Gregory XIII's expert on English affairs, was sent to Spain in 1573 to induce Philip II to invade England, went to Ireland as papal agent to encourage an insurrection, and died, probably of starvation, having been hunted for nearly two years after the defeat in 1580 of the Spanish/Italian expedition.

While it is tempting to suppose that young Patrick must have been impressed by the extremely high doctrine of papal jurisdiction and/or by the account of the suffering of the English Catholic recusants, we have no idea what he thought about the Sanders book or even if he ever examined it, or how or why or when it came into the possession of the Primrose family. It is interesting that neither Patrick nor the librarian was inclined to destroy such an inflammatorily pro-Catholic book (but the worst of the book burning was long over by this date).

The Primrose family first appear in Culross, a royal burgh in Fife, on the Firth of Forth, that carried on a flourishing trade in salt and coal with Scandinavia, Germany and the Netherlands (the finest example of a late 16th/early 17th century Scottish town). Archibald, a monk of the Cistercian abbey (the choir is now the parish church), married at the Reformation and continued to manage the monastery properties until his death in 1593-4. His nephew Gilbert became principal surgeon to King James VI and went with the royal family to London in 1603. Another nephew, Archibald, became Clerk of Taxations and Clerk of Mines in Edinburgh. A third nephew, James, eventually became Clerk to the Privy Council. One of James's daughters, Alison, married George Heriot, the royal goldsmith and banker. James's only son by his second wife, another Archibald, succeeded his father as Clerk to the Privy Council, eventually acquired the Barnbogle/ Dalmeny estates, and fathered the future first Earl of Rosebery.

Henry, a fourth nephew of the ex Cistercian monk, fathered David Primrose, Patrick's father.

Thus Patrick Primrose belonged to a family who counted among its members, all at the same time, the royal surgeon, the chief tax collector, the most important civil servant in Scotland, and the wife of the royal banker.

George Heriot — 'Jinglan Geordie' — died in 1624, leaving £23,625 sterling for the building of a charity school. Begun in 1628, it was nearly 1700 before the present building was completed, though enough existed in 1650 for Cromwell to requisition as a military hospital. Patrick must have seen the north west tower by the time he left Edinburgh but if he ever returned he would have seen nothing like the present George Heriot's School: the grandest Renaissance palace in Edinburgh. ('much too magnificent for the end proposed, that of educating poor children', as Thomas Pennant observed in 1769).

Given that Patrick was born in 1614 and his cousin Archibald in 1616 and both were presumably brought up in Edinburgh, a small town then, in an even more close knit legal community than it is today, it is difficult to believe they did not know one another well.

Archibald succeeded his father James as Clerk to the Privy Council in

1641. He must have known that Patrick had left Edinburgh. He fought for King Charles I, was captured after the defeat of the royalists at Philiphaugh in 1645, tried for treason in Edinburgh, sentenced to death but reprieved. He found his way to England to join King Charles II and was made a baronet on the march to Worcester, where the Scots army was defeated by Cromwell. He kept his head down during the Cromwellian occupation of Scotland, with his estates sequestered, to emerge at the Restoration in 1660 again as Clerk Register to the Privy Council. Thus, in 1670, when the case of Mr Patrick Primrose was discussed by the Privy Council, Archibald was present as the Clerk. One would like to see any notes he made at the time. He became a Lord of Session under the title of Lord Carrington and died in 1679. A fine portrait (by John Scougal) hangs in Dalmeny House, West Lothian, the seat of the earls of Rosebery.

His son, another Archibald (1661-1723), one of the Scottish Commissioners who arranged the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, was the first Earl of Rosebery.

The fifth Earl, Archibald Philip Primrose (1847-1929), the most famous member of the family, married Hannah, heir of Baron Meyer de Rothschild of Mentmore, was leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister (1894-5), supported Scottish Home Rule, and wrote many historical works. (Dalmeny House, an early 19th century mansion, open to the public, contains the pictures and other treasures from Mentmore.) He was well aware of Patrick Primrose's membership of the family. In *The History of the Primrose-Rosebery Family 1500-1900*, by J. Macbeth Forbes (1907), Patrick is identified as the priest arrested for saying Mass at Kinnairdy in 1670, though not as a Dominican. The fifth Earl's copy is much annotated; nothing is added at this point.

School fellows in Edinburgh

'Patricius Prymross' graduated at the University of Edinburgh on 23 July 1631. He was only 17 but there was nothing unusual about this.

In a class of over forty, two became doctors of medicine, while nine became 'ministers of the Word'¹⁶.

The only member of the class of 1631 to gain eminence in Scottish history was Robert Leighton (1611-84). His father, Alexander Leighton (1568-1649), a graduate of St Andrews and Leyden, practised as a physician in England and wrote ultra-Puritan tracts, including 'Zion's Plea against prelacy' (1630) for which he had an ear cut off by order of the Star Chamber.

For all we know, of course, Leighton and Primrose may never have exchanged a single word. His career, all the same, may suggest something of the turmoil that a thoughtful young member of the Church of Scotland could go through in the 1630s.

After graduating, Robert Leighton spent some years mostly in France. He was presented to the living of Newbattle in 1641. He must have signed the National Covenant at his ordination; in 1643 he subscribed to the much more anti-Catholic Solemn League and Covenant (see below). On a visit to London he applied to Cromwell for the vacant principalship of the University of Edinburgh, to which he was appointed in 1653. He had long found the intolerance of the Kirk courts such that 'he had loathed them, for the most part, and wearied of them'. He was widely read in both classical and patristic literature, and spoke French and Latin fluently. His only brother Elisha Leighton (graduated 1637, secretary to the Duke of York, in Edinburgh between 1679 and 1682, the future King James VII and II, the last Catholic monarch) became a Catholic. Happening to be in London in 1661 on his way home from Bath Robert found himself manoeuvred into becoming Bishop of Dunblane. His whole life as a bishop was devoted to bringing the episcopalians and presbyterians in the Kirk into some kind of unity. Much against his will, he was translated to be Archbishop of Glasgow in 1669, but his efforts to accommodate the Presbyterians failed. He resigned in 1674 to spend the remaining ten years of his life in retirement in England, with a widowed sister in Sussex (he never married)¹⁷. His library of some 1400 volumes at Dunblane remains a remarkable testimony to his learning¹⁸.

The 'Second Reformation'

Patrick Primrose was admitted as a member of the Faculty of Advocates on 15 January 1635, thus when he was nearly 21. No record exists of his ever appearing in a legal case even as a junior.

This takes us into Edinburgh in the 1630s and the situation in which Patrick decided to leave Scotland.

As soon as Charles I succeeded to the throne, in 1625, disaffection with the monarchy, episcopalianism and the English, rapidly developed. The Scots, who had not been involved in a foreign war since 1560, found themselves required to contribute men and materials to renewed hostilities between England and Spain, and then between England and France. Neither the economy nor the administration was well adapted to cope easily. Charles's choice of men to govern Scotland on his behalf was perhaps not very wise. Above all, when he sought to recover former church property from the magnates who had benefited from the Reformation, he entrenched the opposition. His main object was to recover the teinds (tithes) for the use of the reformed Church, but the sweeping scope of the measure created great dismay among the property owning class.

His first (and last) visit to Edinburgh, in 1633, passed off with much

pomp and ceremony (to which David Primrose contributed as we have noted). He clearly did not learn anything from his encounter with his northern kingdom. He deeply upset the Edinburgh burgesses. The cost of the royal visit was £40,000. He insisted on a new parliament house, a very expensive project, £127,000: now one of Edinburgh's architectural glories (though the grandest rooms are early 19th century constructions). He insisted on there being a bishop of Edinburgh and had the partitions dividing St Giles into three churches demolished to create the Cathedral (not that it has been the bishop of Edinburgh's church since 1690). He wanted two new churches to be built for the congregations ousted from St Giles — of which one was built (Tron). It is not that the Edinburgh burgesses were poor, far from it; church collections kept rising, substantial sums were given to charitable causes, there was no problem a few years later in raising vast amounts to finance military operations against the King. But there is no doubt that, in the 1630s, educated and prosperous people nourished financial grievances against the King¹⁹.

Once again, theology helped out. In 1636, with the book of canons that referred to the 'Royal Supremacie in Causes Ecclesiasticall', the King was well on the way to provoking the riots over the new liturgy which occurred in 1637. Fears were aroused about the 'anglicanization' and thus the 'anglicization' of the Scottish Church through the King's desire to impose William Laud's liturgical reforms, including the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer (against which Knox had no objections, as we saw), without the consent of the General Assembly. While no one now believes in Jennie Geddes's celebrated intervention during the liturgy in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, in 1637 (there was a greengrocer of this name in the High Street who made a bonfire of her stock to celebrate the restoration of Charles II in 1660), there clearly were liturgical as well as economic and political reasons for hostility to the King, even if these were fomented by the likes of John Leslie, earl of Rothes, a leader of the Covenanters though 'a man of dissolute life' (Donaldson).

Patrick must have left Edinburgh between 1635 and 1637/8. He must have witnessed the opposition gathering among the nobles, lairds, burgesses and ministers, but perhaps not the culmination in February 1638 in the 'Noblemen's Covenant', the National Covenant, signed in Greyfriars church in Edinburgh (the first new Protestant church, in the former garden of the Franciscan priory; wrecked in 1718 when gunpowder stored in the tower exploded; the present church opened in 1721).

The Covenant begins by condemning all things Roman Catholic; going on to cite all the parliamentary statutes construable as defining the polity and liturgy of the reformed Church in Scotland. It underwrites

presbyterianism without ever explicitly repudiating episcopacy. It implicitly condemns the recent innovations in liturgy without ever saying what they actually were or what would be better. It articulates the 'second Reformation'.

It would be easy to see it as defiance of the King, as resentment at remote rule from London²⁰. Yet, as a 'covenant', with a background in biblical literalism which took the Old Testament as a source book of legal precedent of universal validity, the National Covenant, more deeply and pervasively, identified the Scots as a covenanted nation, God's chosen people. In the Solemn League and Covenant, drawn up in 1643, a treaty between the Scots and Charles I's parliamentary opponents in England, designed to afford the English a Scottish army to defeat the King and (the Scots thought) to secure the reformed Church of England for presbyterianism, we have an even more overt sense of being caught up in an apocalyptic struggle between God and the devil in the latter days of the world. Samuel Rutherford (c.1600-61), regarded as one of Scotland's greatest theologians, political theorists and devotional writers, contended, in his *Lex, Rex* (1644), that the Crown is bestowed by the will of the people but backs this with (for us now) much more problematic theocentric nationalism: Scotland, he wrote in 1633, 'our Lord took off the dunghill and out of hell and made a fair bride to Himself'. Archibald Johnston of Wariston (1611-63, executed in Edinburgh at Charles II's behest), one of the lawyers who drafted the Covenant, saw parallels between Scotland and ancient Israel, 'the only two sworn nations to the Lord', considered the day the Covenant was signed to be 'that glorious marriage day of the kingdom with God' and even wrote of 'Scotland's God'²¹.

Given that Johnston, son of an Edinburgh merchant, though a Glasgow University graduate who had also studied in France, became an advocate in Edinburgh in 1633, it is not unlikely that he and Patrick Primrose knew one another. At what point in the mid 1630s Patrick Primrose decided to become a Catholic and leave Scotland we have (as yet anyway) no way of determining. Given the royalist and episcopalian commitments of his family, it is hard to believe that his departure was not affected by the crisis in Edinburgh. His cousin Archibald, endangering his life in the royalist cause, obviously did not accept Rutherford's conception of a limited monarchy. We can only guess at why Patrick exchanged the reformed Church of Scotland for the Catholic Church: it would make sense if he wanted out of what could easily seem an increasingly nationalist Church for the larger space of European Catholicism.

The Irish Dominicans

The next firm date that we have is 29 December 1649, when Patrick, described as a Scot and a friar of the province of Ireland, already a priest, left the Dominican study house in Bologna, for the Convento di S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. On 20 September 1650 the Congregation of Propaganda approved his request for authorization as a missionary in the three kingdoms of Great Britain (Scotland, Ireland, England). On 8 November 1651, the Master of the Order, appointed him Vicar General of the Province of Scotland, in the hope, presumably, that the time had come to try to restore the Order in that country. Patrick required a dispensation since he had not been in the Order for twelve years. This means, as Ross notes, that he cannot have entered the Order much earlier than 1637.

That suggests that Patrick left Edinburgh soon after 1635. We don't know where he went, when he became a Catholic or how he met the Irish Dominicans. In 1629 the Order entrusted Scotland to the care of the Irish province, exhorting them to send friars to Scotland as soon as possible 'to restore Catholicism by preaching and example'. In 1638, when the Irish provincial chapter wanted to send friars to Scotland, the Master of the Order discouraged them (mountainous country and poverty); but permitted them to receive Scots novices. The Irish Dominicans had a house in Paris, where John Baptist Hackett was charged with the theological instruction of the novices. Of an Anglo-Norman family, he entered the Order at Cashel about 1622, studied in Spain, lectured in Dominican study houses in Milan, Naples and Rome, where he died in 1676, leaving a large number of published works, apparently representative of post-Cajetan Thomism.

The best guess is that Patrick was a novice in Paris, instructed by Fr Hackett, moved to Milan and Bologna where he completed his philosophical and theological studies, before reappearing in history in 1649²².

In 1645 this same Fr Hackett met young Philip Howard in Milan ('at the very first sight of Mr Philip was in love with him ... carried us into his chamber and gave Mr Philip eggs, wine and biscuit', etc., according to a servant writing to Philip's mother). The Howard family strenuously attempted to discredit Fr Hackett and get the young man out of Dominican clutches. He was to be the second founder of the English province of the Order of Preachers. In 1666, now Vicar General of the English Dominicans, and principal chaplain to Queen Catherine, he was pressing for Patrick Primrose's promotion to the degree of Master in Sacred Theology. Dispensing him from the examination until a more convenient time and suitable place, the Master granted Patrick the status of STM. It is far from clear what difference this can have made as he no doubt wondered how much

longer he could say Mass in the safety of Kinnairdy with the Crichtons (see below). Perhaps Howard was only doing his best to bolster the reputation and confidence of his opposite number in Scotland. No doubt he was responsible for having Patrick made one of the Queen's chaplains, which at least allowed him to get out of his prison cell in Banff. Howard and Primrose never lived in the same Dominican priory, so far as one can see; they could have met, at least briefly, in Milan, Rome or Paris.²³

Scots contemporaries

To return to Rome in 1650: Propaganda considered an application to return to Scotland from two secular priests, as well as from Patrick: William Ballentine and John Walker. They too had studied at the University of Edinburgh. They probably all knew one another well though, again, we have no evidence one way or the other.

William Ballantine (Ballenden, Bannatine and other spellings), born in North Berwick where his father was minister, left the University of Edinburgh without graduating, became a Catholic in Paris, was a student at the Scots College in Rome in 1641, moved between Paris and Scotland from 1649, lived in Banffshire at Bog of Gight (a Huntly Gordon house), spent nearly two years in prison in London, got back to Elgin in 1660 where he died the following year, aged 43, in the care of Mary Grant, widowed Marchioness of Huntly, who saw to his funeral in Elgin cathedral, with Catholic rites and many local Protestants in attendance. It is possible, even likely, that Patrick presided at the funeral.

John Walker, son of an Edinburgh merchant, graduated in 1635, writes as though disgust at the power of the presbyterian faction and their hostility to the monarchy decided him to become a Catholic before he left Edinburgh, got to the Scots College, Rome, in 1643, returned to Scotland with Ballantine, was arrested in Strathbogie (Huntly) in 1655, held at Fren draught, released at the instigation of 'certain noble ladies', and eventually retired to Rome in 1671 in poor health, where he was somewhat neglected (begging letters survive), dying in April 1679.

His book, *Presbyteries Triall or the Occasion and Motives of Conversion to the Catholique Faith, of a Person of Quality in Scotland*, (Paris 1657), certainly suggests that, perhaps like Primrose and Ballantine, Walker was among those who had been happily brought up in the Church as reformed in 1560, at least where episcopalianism predominated; but when faced with the 'second reformation' in 1638 of Covenanting Presbyterians decided that they preferred episcopalianism and loyalty to the King, hierarchy and monarchy — and found themselves moving towards Catholicism.²⁴

Vocations promoter

In 1651 Patrick Primrose was in Paris, recruiting Scots for the Order, mostly men from the North East Lowlands as it happens. Arthur Forbes, recusant Aberdeenshire family; he eventually became a soldier and laird of Balvenie in Banffshire; he died in 1695. Edward White, born in Buchan, with a cousin a secular priest, completed his Dominican studies in 1659 and wanted to return to Scotland but was put off by the Master of the Order. In 1661 Primrose sought to get him to Scotland, but he was assigned to the revived English Dominicans at Bornhem, in Flanders, in 1662. Alexander Lumsden, whose parents William Lumsden of Crombie and Helen Barclay, were Aberdeen Catholics, went to Douai in 1641 aged 17, joined the Scottish Benedictines at Würzburg in 1644, did not persevere, studied in Rome and became a Dominican, turns up in London in 1679 as one of the priests falsely accused by Titus Oates — the ‘Popish Plot’, supposedly to assassinate Charles II. Lumsden was condemned to death but, as a Scot and so not subject to English law, he was reprieved (many others were not so fortunate). He went as chaplain to the English Canonesses in Brussels and seems to have died peacefully in England about 1700 (recorded as ‘Confessor of the Faith’ in the necrology of the English Dominicans).²⁵

Patrick had no success as a vocations promoter. In a report to Rome in 1655, he is said to be active in the Lothians, ‘an eloquent man and full of zeal’. It is also noted that he was never a missionary in Angus. It is hard to see the implications. In the supplication sent in 1661 by the Aberdeen presbytery to the Privy Council in Edinburgh, seeking help in putting down popery and quakerism, Patrick Primrose — ‘alias Captain Ogilvy’ — is clearly settled in the North East Lowlands. The report to Rome by Ballentine (c. 1660) — a who’s who of Catholic Scotland at the time²⁶ — lists a fair number of Catholics in that region, particularly in Banff and Garioch, by the Deveron (‘a good salmon river’), headed by the Marchioness of Huntly and all her household, followed immediately, in order of precedence, by the Crichtons of Frendraught, including among them ‘Domina de Kennerdi’.

‘False Frendraught’

This ‘Dame of Kinnairdy’, as she was in 1660, is Elizabeth Gordon, eldest daughter of John Gordon 12th earl of Sutherland. Brought up at Dornoch she crossed the Moray Firth to some Banffshire port in order to marry James Crichton of Frendraught in 1619. She is one of the most significant figures in Patrick Primrose’s story; surely the one who brought him to Kinnairdy and enabled him to say Mass there for so long.

She was the grand-daughter of the celebrated Lady Jean Gordon

(1546-1629), sister of the Marquis of Huntly, briefly wedded to James Hepburn, earl of Bothwell, who abandoned her to wed Mary Queen of Scots in 1567 (disastrously of course), then married for many years to the 11th earl of Sutherland, whose estates she ran successfully after his death, opening coal mines, exploiting salt pans and so forth, cannily continuing to draw rents from Bothwell's estates all the time, and finally marrying her first love, Alexander Ogilvy of Boyne. She died at Dunrobin Castle, Sutherland (not the present building); but she must have lived at the magnificent Renaissance palace of Boyne (built 1575-80, abandoned in the late 18th century), near Portsoy, for some years while her granddaughter was at Frendraught. Whether or not they saw much of one another, these were formidable women.²⁷

Elizabeth Gordon lived at Frendraught, in Aberdeenshire, presumably happily enough, for the first ten years of her marriage (the present house has no visible connection with the one she knew). Her husband, James Crichton, was involved in a feud with Gordon, laird of neighbouring Rothiemay, about salmon fishing rights in the Deveron, which led to an encounter between the parties in which Rothiemay and his cousin were killed. For months the feud continued, with attempts to patch it up. This came to a head, on 8 October 1630: Rothiemay's son and the Marquis of Huntly's son Lord Aboyne and their retainers were persuaded to stay overnight at Frendraught, after a supposed reconciliation, and died when the free-standing tower in which they were accommodated (apparently locked from outside) went on fire. One of Crichton's enemies was eventually hanged for the crime, protesting his innocence to the last. Crichton spent the rest of his life in Edinburgh for fear that the Gordons would take revenge. The inquiry exonerated him: some supposed at the time because the Government wanted to foster the Crichtons of Frendraught against the Gordons of Huntly. In the mid 1630s, still at Frendraught, Elizabeth is described as 'factrix to hir husband and hes powar of him in all his affairs'.

In the early nineteenth century ballad 'Frennet Hall', Elizabeth Gordon is portrayed as the 'vengeful dame', 'the lady sly', who lured the young lords to their doom. Arthur Johnston, Rector of King's College, Aberdeen, a doctor of medicine and something of a poet ('the Scottish Ovid'), inspected the remains, was convinced the fire was no accident, and composed two Latin poems: one hints that Crichton was the fire raiser, the other urges the local authorities to torture suspects in order to obtain the truth. These poems were published in Holland, in 1637 and 1642.

The much more famous ballad, 'The Fire of Frendraught', running to twenty six stanzas, is among the 3000 folk songs collected in the North

East. Mentioned in 1798, first printed in 1825, it bears all the signs of being composed soon after the event. Crichton's wife is featured in the worst possible light. The Gordon party is saddled to go when, in the second verse, 'out it came her, false Fren draught, Inviting them to bide'. 'When Mass was sung and bells was rung', so the ballad goes on, alluding to her reputation as a recusant Catholic, everyone went to bed (unlikely as it is that Mass was said in the evening). Almost at once the fire broke out. The trapped men try to persuade Lady Fren draught to save them, but she claims that the keys to the Tower have been 'casten in the deep draw well'. There follows a highly dramatic and moving dialogue between one of the servants who has escaped and his young master who flings him his rings to go to his widow. To say the least, Elizabeth Gordon, as 'false Fren draught', has a bad name in North East folk song.

In his *Breiffe Narrative of the services done to three noble ladyes*, composed probably in Paris about 1653, the secular priest Gilbert Blackhall retails a graphic account of the fire, clearly blaming the Crichtons. On the other hand, the third noble lady to whom he was chaplain from 1637 to 1642, was young Aboyne's widow Sophia Hay²⁸.

The Crichtons and the Gregories

Elizabeth Gordon had moved from Fren draught to Kinnairdy by the 1640s. She was frequently harassed for recusancy. In 1648 she was summoned by the presbytery for 'her avowed papistre, receipt of masse priests', etc. (so Patrick Primrose had predecessors, saying Mass in the house). She went to the Kirk occasionally, even subscribed to the extremely anti-Catholic Solemn League and Covenant, but in 1652 we find she had repented of this apostasy and 'relapsed to poperie'. She is among the Catholics listed in 1654, and again about 1660 in Ballentine's list (as noted above). Her name does not appear on the Aberdeen presbytery list of 1661, though her son's does, with his family — but there is no way of telling whether she was dead or temporarily in communion with the Kirk.

Her eldest son James Crichton (c.1620-c.1665) was created Viscount Fren draught in 1642, as a supporter of King Charles I. He fought with Montrose but did not take his own life after Montrose's defeat in 1650 as the Dictionary of National Biography says.

This takes us to the feud between the Crichtons and the Gregory family. The feud was all on the Crichton side: the Gregories were a respectable Aberdeen city family, quite different from savage country gentry like the Crichtons. What Fr Primrose, 'alias Captain Ogilvy', thought of his protectors we can only guess: if he sometimes passed as a military man, to disguise his priesthood, he was perhaps not particularly

dismayed by the Crichton men's violent behaviour.

Kinnairdy is a fifteenth century tower high above the Deveron, some two miles south of Aberchirder. The main room contains an oak-panelled aumbry dated 1493, with heads representing Sir Alexander Innes, 13th of that ilk, given the house by his father in 1487, and his wife Christian Dunbar. In 1627 the house passed from the Innes family to the Crichtons; early in the twentieth century it was acquired by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, Lord Lyon King of Arms, and gradually restored (not open to the public). In 1647, however, Kinnairdy was wadset (mortgaged) by Viscount Frendraught, head of the family in his father's absence, to John Gregory the minister of Drumoak.

Kinnairdy is known in connection with the Gregory family, who have several entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, including the minister's sons James Gregory (1638-1675), who worked on optics and mathematics, the more famous David (1627-1720), who is said to have lived in Kinnairdy for many years, where he practised medicine and had a great range of scientific interests. He had 29 (or perhaps 32) children by two wives; a daughter by his second wife was the mother of the philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-96), Hume's most perceptive critic (not that Hume paid any heed, he only scoffed at Reid's Scotticisms). His son David (1661-1708), more famous still (well, not so philoprogenitive but an Oxford professor) is said to have been born in Kinnairdy in 1661.

That cannot be correct. According to Agnes Grainger Stewart²⁹, David was born in his father's house in Upper Kirkgate, Aberdeen; attended Aberdeen grammar school and one or other of the two universities in Aberdeen, moved to Edinburgh where he became professor of mathematics in 1683. He was investigated by the royal commission in 1690 charged with the duty of dismissing Episcopalians and Jacobites, but allowed to retain his chair. With Isaac Newton's assistance he moved to Oxford in 1692 where, as 'the Scotchman', he put up with a good deal of contumely. He remained a firm sympathizer with the Stuarts and the episcopalian system.

John Gregory acquired the Kinnairdy and Netherdale estates in satisfaction of the £3800 he had lent the Crichtons. His son Alexander inherited but was never able to get possession of Kinnairdy. An attempt in 1660 to get the Crichtons out legally failed: they refused to vacate the house. By then Fr Primrose was probably in residence. It would be pleasant to think the Crichtons wanted to keep Kinnairdy as a Mass centre. If so their love of the Old Religion was not matched by their morals. In 1664 Viscount Frendraught inveigled Alexander Gregory into a trap, in the manse at Fergie, got him to fight, with sword and pistols, had him severely wounded and moved to 'the hous of George Morisone of

Boignie'. There he lay untended for three weeks. Then, slung over a horse, he was moved and abandoned in a more remote house. Rescued by friends, he was taken to Aberdeen where he died. His brother David (the elder), described as a burgess of Aberdeen, accused the Crichtons of 'the murder, at least slaughter', but on evidence provided principally by Morison of Bognie the charge failed. No reason is given in the court record for this affray but it must surely have been connected with the attempt by Alexander Gregory to gain occupancy of Kinnairdy.

According to the minute book of the Barons and Freeholders of the Sheriffdom of Banff, Viscount Frendraught had the 'lands of Convoeye, Kinairdie, Neytherdeall and Tortries' in 1664. It is only at the election of Commissioners of the Shire for the Parliament in Edinburgh in 1685 that 'D. Gregorie of Kinnairdy' appears on the list. From then onwards Gregory of Kinairdy (various spellings) appears until the end of the century. In 1706 we find 'Thomas Donaldsone of Kinnairdie' By then, the elder David Gregory (the Oxford professor's father) was settled back in Aberdeen (in 1715, at the age of 90, he took his family to Holland for two or three years, presumably to avoid being implicated in the Jacobite rebellion).

It seems safe to conclude that no Gregory got into Kinnairdy until the late 1670s at the earliest. And in the end, when the episcopalian/Jacobite Gregory family, with their university education, finally got these equally royalist, recusant aristocratic ruffians out, the question of religion was obviously irrelevant. Viscount Frendraught died by 1665, in his middle 40s; his mother, Elizabeth Gordon, would have been in her middle 60s (we don't know precisely when she was born), but might also have been dead by then (we don't know when she died, as a recusant she was probably buried anonymously, perhaps at Forge). The Crichtons anyway obviously continued to thwart the Gregories. And to allow Fr Primrose to say Mass, until 1670.

One of the questions that remain unanswered is where Patrick Primrose stayed in his last weeks. Could he have been taken back to Kinnairdy? There were several other recusant houses in the neighbourhood. Balvenie, not so far distant, was occupied by Arthur Forbes, the onetime Dominican novice (his creditors claimed it in 1687 and allowed it to fall into ruin).

What about Huntly itself? Abandoned by the owners in the 1750s but still the splendid ruin of a 17th century chateau, this was the stronghold of the Catholic faith in the North East. Mary Grant, the redoubtable Marchioness of Huntly, widowed in 1653, certainly protected William Ballantine, as we have seen. She was still alive as late as 1707 but by 1671 was remarried and living in Angus. Her son, George Gordon (1643-1717),

fourth Marquis of Huntly, was on the Grand Tour. In 1676 he was to marry Elizabeth Howard, niece of the Dominican Cardinal Philip Howard. In 1697 she left him to live in a convent in Flanders. She died in Edinburgh in 1732 and was buried in Elgin. She left money to help restore the Dominicans in Scotland but, invested unwisely by the English Dominicans, it was all lost.

Artloch and Cairnborrow, farms within a couple of miles of Patrick's grave, were, however, occupied by recusant Gordon lairds: the likeliest refuge.

Finally, a chalice turned up in a sale in Aberdeen, a typical example of seventeenth century Irish craftsmanship, inscribed inside the base 'Fr pat primarosa Rosarii Ordinis Praed: Mis: Scot'. Bought by a local Catholic who saw what it was, and given to the Dominicans in Edinburgh by Canon George Grant, parish priest of Beaulieu from 1934 to 1954, who retired to Buckie where he died in 1959, this little chalice, apart from Tiraqueau and Sanders, is the only artefact with a link to Patrick Primrose³⁰. At their provincial chapter in 1672 at Mullingar the Irish Dominicans prayed for the repose of his soul.

- 1 Tolbooth: town hall where tolls etc. were collected, with prison cells.
- 2 Charles II's Queen, Catherine of Braganza, brought two Dominican friars with her from Portugal in 1662, where Irish Dominicans were well established.
- 3 The struggle between episcopalians and presbyterians in the reformed Church of Scotland was not settled until 1689/90 when the Edinburgh parliament accepted William and Mary provided that the Kirk became presbyterian; episcopalians were expelled or withdrew; the Scottish Episcopal Church, in the Anglican Communion, with seven bishops, is said to have about 70 thousand active members.
- 4 Anthony Ross OP, 'Dominicans and Scotland in the Seventeenth Century', *The Innes Review* 23 (1972): 40–75.
- 5 See the magisterial work of Leslie J. Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland 1431–1514: The Struggle for Order* (Aberdeen, 1985, 1995).
- 6 Cajetan's candidate to succeed him as Master of the Order in 1518 is said to have been John Adamson; the best study of the Dominicans in Scotland remains unpublished: Janet Foggie, 'The Dominicans in Scotland 1450–1560' (University of Edinburgh PhD 1998). For John Adamson see M.-H. Laurent OP, 'Léon X et la Province dominicaine d'Ecosse', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* XIII (1943): 149–161, including 4 letters from the Pope to Adamson; and Allan J. White OP, 'Dominicans and the Scottish University Tradition', *New Blackfriars* 82 (2001): 434–449.
- 7 Much has been written about her but (to my mind) nothing better than the devastating critique by Jenny Wormald, *Mary, Queen of Scots: Politics, Passion and a Kingdom Lost* (London and New York 2001).

- 8 John Rough went to England to preach, married in Newcastle, fled when Mary Tudor came to the throne but made the mistake of returning to London where he was arrested, condemned, and burned at Smithfield in 1557.
- 9 For John Knox see R. Kyle, *The Mind of John Knox* (Lawrence, Kansas 1984); R. Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation* (Grand Rapids 1980); and H.R. Sefton, *John Knox* (Edinburgh 1993).
- 10 Neither the First Book of Discipline (1560–1), reforming the polity of and securing endowment for the Kirk, extending education and poor relief, nor the Second (1578), suppressing the episcopal system, received the government sanction which would have enabled them to be carried out fully.
- 11 Often forgotten, though not by Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London 1991), John Black, a Dominican friar, one of the Queen's four special preachers, was murdered on the same night in March 1566 as Riccio, by an antiCatholic gang; some of Black's books have survived.
- 12 The metrical Psalms have been central in Scottish Presbyterian worship. The only pre-Reformation composition by David Peebles (fl. 1530–76) which survives is his beautiful Pentecost motet 'Si quis diligit me'.
- 13 See *Fasti Aberdonenses: Selections from the Records of the University and King's College of Aberdeen 1494–1854* (Aberdeen 1854); for general background to the Reformation in Scotland see 'Reformation', in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, edited by Michael Lynch (Oxford 2001); or 'In Search of the Scottish Reformation' by the same author in *Scottish History: The Power of the Past*, edited by Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (Edinburgh 2002); or Julian Goodare's chapter in *The Reformation in National Context*, edited by Bob Scribner, Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge 1994); for Aberdeen see David Stevenson, *King's College, Aberdeen, 1560–1641: From Protestant Reformation to Covenanting Revolution* (Aberdeen 1990); B. McLennan, 'Presbyterianism Challenged: a study of Catholicism and Episcopacy in the North-East of Scotland 1560–1650' (Aberdeen PhD 1977); and Allan J. White, 'Religion, Politics, and Society in Aberdeen 1543–1593' (Edinburgh PhD 1985). For the move 'from a profoundly sensual and ceremonial experience of religion to the dominance of the word through Book and sermon' see Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven 2002), a superb book.
- 14 Photocopies of the title pages in Ross, 1972. Most of the detail here is reconstructed from clues in Robert Douglas, *The Peerage of Scotland*, etc. (Edinburgh 1764 and later editions).
- 15 See *Selected Justiciary Cases 1624–1650* edited by Stair A. Gillon (Edinburgh 1953).
- 16 *A Catalogue of the Graduates in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity, and Law of the University of Edinburgh since its Foundation* (1858).
- 17 For an attractive picture of Robert Leighton see David Allan, *Philosophy and Politics in Later Stuart Scotland: Neo-Stoicism, Culture and Ideology in an Age of Crisis, 1540–1690* (East Linton 2000): chapter 5.
- 18 Clement (?1200–?1258), leader of the first Dominicans in Scotland,

became Bishop of Dunblane in 1234 and launched the building programme of which the cathedral, roofless in Leighton's time but partly restored in the nineteenth century, remains an impressive result.

- 19 Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII* (Edinburgh 1971): chapter 16; Allan I. MacInnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement 1625–1641* (Edinburgh 1991).
- 20 No doubt the noblemen were attracted by a political theology that placed limitations on royal authority; for the history (and mythology) of Scots attempts since 1320 to curb state power see *A Claim of Right for Scotland*, edited by Owen Dudley Edwards (Edinburgh 1989).
- 21 For 'covenant theology': David Stevenson, *The Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland* (Edinburgh 1988); and David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590–1638* (Oxford 2000).
- 22 For Irish Dominican life on the Continent at the time Patrick joined the Order, and some remarkable characters he must have heard of, see Thomas S. Flynn OP, *The Irish Dominicans 1536–1641* (Dublin 1993).
- 23 For Howard, Hackett, and a somewhat misleading account of Primrose (he was not baptised Peter, so Patrick was not his name in religion; we cannot be sure that he joined the Order in France; he did not die in prison), see Godfrey Anstruther OP, *A Hundred Homeless Years : English Dominicans 1558–1658* (London 1958).
- 24 For Ballentine and Walker see M.V. Hay, *The Blairs Papers* (London and Edinburgh 1929)
- 25 All this in Ross, 1972.
- 26 The who's who of Catholic Scotland, 'Prefect Ballentine's Report, circa 1660' appears in *The Innes Review* 8 (1957): 39–66, 99–129. See, for the important role of lairds' wives, Alastair Roberts, 'The role of women in Scottish Catholic survival', *Scottish Historical Review* 190 (1991): 129–50; for recusancy generally, Allan I. MacInnes, 'Catholic Recusancy and the Penal Laws', *Scottish Church History Society Records* 23 (1989): 27–63; and the maps in *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* edited by Peter G.B. McNeill and Hector L. MacQueen (Edinburgh 1996): 406–410 (marking Fren draught but not Kinnairdy); for the North-East see Alastair Roberts, 'Popery in Buchan and Strathbogie in the early seventeenth century', *SCHSR* 27 (1997): 126–155.
- 27 See Margaret H.B. Sanderson, *Mary Stewart's People: Life in Mary Stewart's Scotland* (Edinburgh 1987): 34–54.
- 28 For Blackhall see David Mathew, *Scotland Under Charles I* (London 1955); and David Stevenson, *King or Covenant? Voices from the Civil War* (East Linton 1996): chapter 4. For the life of priests in Scotland at the time see Daniel Szechi, 'Defending the True Faith: Kirk, State, and Catholic Missioners in Scotland, 1654–1755', *The Catholic Historical Review* 82 (1996): 397–411 (repeating the mistake that Patrick Primrose died in prison).
- 29 *The Academic Gregories* (Edinburgh 1901).
- 30 See Anthony Ross OP, *Dogs of the Lord: The Story of the Dominican Order in Scotland*, published to coincide with the exhibition 'Dogs of the Lord' held at the City Art Centre, Edinburgh, 15 October–28 November 1981.