

until those silent corruptions covered the kingdom with loathesome forms.

The priesthood, seemingly so immaculate, sank in unseen vice, reminding us of the under-world of violence and obscenities that was thrown open to view before the days of Luther.

Jobbery resulted when Churchwork became a huge financial scheme. The Monks, whose fame for learning in Europe gave a prestige to the name, were ignorant bookworms who imposed their Latin on an innocent people, and thereby cheaply gained a reputation for scholarship. But the truth was the office was now without the duties. The bishops and priests did not elevate the parishes, but rather hunted around for positions whose emoluments were handsome, and the acutest scent, of course, was the most useful. It was no secret that churchmen competed for places.

Then the noxious system of nunneries and monasteries not only burdened the revenue uselessly, but swarmed with a species of lewd wickedness which it would be disgraceful to write down. The unnatural law against marriage was stringent at first, but was loose at the last, and society was unclean. Then the clarion voices and quenchless zeal of the Reformers, whose spirits rankled at the undermining influence of Popery, heightened the ill-will of the nation. The warcry was not smothered altogether.

There now arose a second of the cluster of great names which Hugh Miller has noticed. The first we have already reviewed; the third consists of Chalmers and Candlish and Cunningham and Gordon; the second consists of Wishart and Patrick Hamilton and John Knox—men great by nature, yet fashioned by the circumstances of the age.

Patrick Hamilton, of high birth, with poor schooling, crossed to Wittenberg, and attracted the eye of Luther and Melancthon, who foresaw

a brilliant future before him. But a desire nestled within him to release his countrymen from the gross darkness which overhung them. He preached with power to the people, but with danger to his life. Wishart was a like-minded coadjutor in the cause of Reform. The popular feeling was fast inflaming. But the guiding and practical sagacity of Knox prevented a frantic outburst which would only have delayed the object in view. The Catholics held out strongly against reconciliatory measures; the Queen Regent, whom Knox fondly ventured to hope to be on the right side, sneeringly cast off every appeal.

The arrival of the French increased the consternation and despaired the Reformers not a little. The Queen Regent's course had been very guileful, and now she sought as allies the arms of France. The Reformers appealed to Elizabeth. France and England then agreed to vacate Scotland. The Reform cause now was relieved and breathed freely. It gained ground daily; it wrung concessions from reluctant Catholics. When matters were ripe, an Assembly was summoned, and the existence of the Scottish Church was fixed.

The whole history is like a plot, rising in interest until the climax is reached. The work is laid out in such a manner that the eagerness grows and swells from chapter to chapter. Yet there is not the least sign of hurry or of confusion as the record approaches the end.

Still the peculiar fascination lingers over the first part of the work. The last part is more or less familiar, being well within historic times. But the progress of the Gospel among the rude, wild Picts and among the tribes of Ireland is almost new ground: the life-work of Patrick and Columba and Nimian and Palladius would enrich our biography; and the underhand manner in which the Roman power acquired Scotland is singularly instructive.