

they obtained from kings and barons the patronage and tithes of parish churches, which had previously been served by the secular clergy, many of them being younger sons of families of rank, and who, from their right to all the parochial tithes, were called *rectors*, or parsons. In this way, not only the old monastic or college rents of the Culdees, but even the parish churches, passed from the hands of the secular into those of the regular clergy. The latter having thus obtained a right to the parsonage, or benefice, deputed one of their own order to take charge of the parish, as *vicar*, assigning to him a portion of the tithes as stipend, the remainder helping to endow their monastery. The Monks of Arbroath held at least thirty-five parish churches in *vicariate*.

ABBEY OF ST. ANDREW'S.

Gray city, like some fortalice of yore,
Set on rock-ramparts, against which the sea
Hurls up its stormy spears perpetually,
And sweeps them backward, shattered and hoar,
Beneath thy feet the eastward tides still roar,
And still thy warrior beauty rises free
Above the shocks of thwarted foam, the glee
Of winds that laugh across the ocean-floor.
Dearer than woods where the wind-flower blows pale,
Or meadows deepening into perfect June,
Are thy bleak streets that hold the past in fee,
Worn shafts and crumbling archway.

The Abbey of St. Andrew's, in Fife, was commenced about 1158, and finished about 1318, being 160 years in course of construction. It exhibited three different styles of architecture in succession—the "latest Norman," the "Early English" and the "Decorated." There had been a Culdee monastery here, founded by St. Regulus, tradition says in the ninth century. The cathedral, commenced some four years after the abbey, was destroyed in 1559 by the impassioned zeal of a mob; for here, in the very centre of the papal jurisdiction, John Knox first opened his lips as a preacher of the Reformed faith in Scotland. Here too it was that Patrick Hamilton suffered martyrdom, 28th February, 1528, and John Wishart, on 1st March, 1546. It appears, however, that these were not the first who became martyrs in Scotland on account of their religious opinions. It is said that James Resby, an Englishman and disciple of Wyclif, was burned in 1422, and Paul Craco, from Bohemia, a follower of Huss, underwent the same cruel death at St. Andrew's ten years later. No wonder then that "the gray city" of St. Andrew's is one of the most interesting old towns in Scotland, apart from its golfing grounds and its university—the "alma mater" of so many distinguished Scotchmen.

ARBROATH ABBEY,

on the East Coast of Forfarshire, was commenced in 1178 by King William (1165-1214), and probably finished in 1233, being therefore some fifty-five years in course of construction. Its style was that of the "transition period," which came between the "latest Norman" and the "early English." Gothic architecture was then in its vigorous youth, its decorations being limited in number and severe and chaste in character, not loaded with the useless ornaments which marred the beauty of the Gothic churches of a later period. Judging by the remains still standing, it must have been an enormously large building—some 284 feet in length, and seventy-one feet in width.

The first company of monks who took possession of it after its completion came from the Abbey of Kelso, which had been founded by David I., and which was the parent establishment of the order of St. Benedict in Scotland.

The Abbey of Arbroath is said to have suffered at different times from wind and fire, and from the fierce barons of Angus, but not from the hands of the Reformers, who confined themselves to removing the monuments of idolatry found within the walls. Arbroath enjoyed 320 years of vitality and usefulness in a greater or less degree from 1178 to 1560—for it must be remembered that in the earlier portion of their history, monasteries (not monasticism)

CONFERRED MANY BENEFITS

upon the population of Europe, and contributed to help forward improvement in manners, literature and civil and religious liberty. They were certainly not confined to the support of a number of monks bound to celibacy but served (1) as lodging places for travellers of every rank, from kings, archbishops and judges, to the poorest scholar who asked hospitality. In them was found shelter and accommodation superior to that of any feudal castle (hotels at that time had no existence), and food for man and beast

was given without fee or reward. (2) The abbey was the only school of the period, the knowledge of letters being confined entirely to ecclesiastics, some of whom had to be employed by kings as judges and political ministers, owing to the ignorance and incapacity of the lay nobility. (3) The abbey possessed libraries which were maintained by land rents; and teachers were employed to instruct the young monks in various branches of learning. (4) The abbot and monks were in many cases the historians of the districts in which they lived. Indeed monasteries were once the only places where books were written, and—what was of equal importance before the days of printing—the only places where books were transcribed. Many of the monks were occupied all their time in copying MSS.—amongst them many ancient MSS. of the Scriptures. (5) The monks of rich abbey—as that of Arbroath—were bountiful almsgivers, each of the abbey having an almonry, where provisions were given weekly or oftener to the poor with unsparing hand. (6) The monks, as intelligent landowners, were also public benefactors by promoting horticulture and agriculture generally. (7) At an early period, too, ecclesiastics did much in the way of emancipating the rural population from the thralldom in which they were held by the barons, previous to the erection of great monasteries. And long afterward, even in the midst of Scotland's contest with all the power of England, the nobility, barons and freeholders of the kingdom met at the Abbey of Arbroath, in April, 1320, and drew up the famous letter to the Pope, in which they asserted the ancient independence of the country, and declared their resolution to maintain that independence, in spite of all the prowess of England's king; and whether the Roman pontiff recognized their rights or not.

CAUSES OF DISSOLUTION.

Notwithstanding the many benefits conferred on society at an early period by these institutions, the system was too artificial, and in some respects, too unnatural, to permit of keeping pace with the progress of civilization and enlightenment. Hence monasteries, instead of being as they once were, ahead of the age, stood still, while society around advanced. About the close of the fifteenth century, every monastic establishment in Scotland fell into decrepitude and corruption; and, as Chalmers in his "Caledonia," says, "when their usefulness was gone their oblivion began."

The inordinate ambition and incompetency of the ecclesiastics of that period are strikingly exposed by Gavin Douglas, in 1513, as well as by Sir David Lindsay, in the strange dialect in use at that time in Scotland.

It has been said that before Knox was born, the glory had departed from the great school of religion and letters which once existed in Arbroath, so far as purity of doctrine and morals, literature or common decency was concerned. Little remained except rapidly increasing idolatry and saint worship, with unblushing prostitution of the endowments for the gratification of sensual pleasure and ambition. "Knox and his coadjutors appeared just in time to inter those now dead and corrupting institutions, which had become too offensive to remain longer unburied."

THE DEMOLITION OF MONASTERIES

and other religious houses, which took place at the beginning of the Scottish Reformation, has supplied the theme for many a declamation against the bigotry and barbarism of the reformers. They may have gone too far owing to the excitement of the time. But "can any man think," says honest Row, "that in such a great alteration in a kingdom, every man did everything rightly?" The churches and cathedrals were generally spared; it was only the monasteries and places identified with superstition that were sacrificed to the popular fury. These had become the strongholds of Popery, and the receptacles of a lazy, corrupt and dissolute class, which had long fattened on the substance of a deluded people. No wonder then if Scotchmen listened to the advice of Knox: "Down with these crow-nests, else the crows will big in them again." When the flames of the monasteries in Perth were ascending, and some were lamenting their destruction, a woman cried out that if they knew the scenes of villany and debauchery that had passed within their walls, they would rather "admire the judgments of heaven in bringing these haunts of pollution to an end."

An occasional look into past ecclesiastical history

is always instructive, because calculated to throw light upon certain practices, or usages, or forms of belief, peculiar to each of the many branches of the Christian Church now in existence. T. H.

Clarens, Switzerland, November, 1885.

NEEMUCH, CENTRAL INDIA.

BY THE REV. W. A. WILSON.

It may be of interest to the friends of our mission in India to know that ground is being broken in a fresh part of the Central India mission field. With the sanction of the Council, I have selected as my field the northern part of Central India, bordering on the Rajputana mission, taking, in the meantime, Neemuch and Mandsam as centres of work.

Neemuch proper, or Old Neemuch as it is sometimes called, is a native city in Scindia's territory, about one mile distant from the British cantonment, in which there is also a large native bazaar. It is situated on the railway, and is within easy reach of many villages where, as yet, nothing has been done either for educating or evangelizing the people.

Mandsam, an old walled city, with a population of 25,000, a centre of a large opium trade, is also on the railway, thirty miles distant from Neemuch, in the direction of Indore.

It is a city wholly given to idolatry, and one's heart may well be stirred like Paul's of old, as everywhere, on the road-side, river-banks, at the roots of trees, in gardens and groves, at street corners, etc., one sees temples, shrines and idols of all kinds, from the rude stone daubed with red paint up to the beautifully-carved statue. Morally and physically it is a foul place, and bears an evil reputation. The people are very religious and very wicked.

It seemed to me well to begin work in these places in such a way as, if possible, to disarm the prejudices of the people, which are so easily excited by the sudden appearance of a European missionary preaching in their midst. One needs an unlimited amount of tact and patience in beginning mission work, especially in native states, where too the difficulties are greatly increased by the hostile attitude of English officials. I thought it might be an advantage to send in first a native teacher to open schools and accustom the people to the idea of Christian teaching in their midst.

Mr. Wilkie has kindly given me, from the Indore Mission, one of the most experienced workers, who has been appointed to Neemuch. Since the beginning of June, he has been labouring there, with a very gratifying reception.

The place used as a school room—a low verandah facing the street, soon became too small for the rapidly-increasing attendance, which has now reached about 100 boys and young men.

Much more roomy and desirable quarters have been secured in a good locality in a large, new, two-story stone house, which, notwithstanding its pigeon-hole rooms, is an unusually fine building for a native city; and it will afford excellent accommodation for the work of the mission.

Another branch of work has also been started here. Mr. L. Kidd, M.R.C.S., retired from Government service, has been engaged to open a medical dispensary, under the care and control of the mission. There is great need for such an institution, both in Neemuch and in Mandsam. As there is no provision of the kind in either place, Dr. Kidd visits Mandsam once a week, remaining two or three days, and treats such cases as are brought under his notice.

Dr. Kidd has his dispensary and living quarters in the building where Balaram, the native catechist, has his school.

We have called upon the Subah (the chief official), a Mohammedan, and explained to him our plans for aiding primary education, which is so much neglected in India, and for giving help to the sick. He seemed much pleased, especially with the latter project, and promised his help.

Indeed the people generally are much pleased at the prospect of a dispensary being established among them. Some of the leading men of the place called for treatment before the medicines were unpacked.

Medical help is much appreciated by the Lathen, and it does much to break down prejudice and to prepare the way for the Gospel. These places are grand fields for medical missionary work, as, not being in British territory, Government has done nothing in