of society in this remote period, yet a few incidental gleams of light are reflected from the lives of the early saints. Thus, in Adomnan’s life of Columba, which was written only eighty years after the saint’s death, we find fre­quent mention of houses of wattle, similar probably to those which the Constable Richard de Moreville, in a charter of the twelfth century, denominates *claiæ niscatœ.@@1* Even the abbey of Iona was built of the same rude materials. The clothing of the monks seems to have been often composed of the skins of beasts, though latterly they had woollen stuffs and linen ; the first probably manufactured by themselves, the linen imported from the continent. Venison, iSsh, milk, flesh, and wild fowl, were the common food of the people. “ The monks of Iona,” says Chalmers, “ who lived by their labour, cultivated their fields, and laid up corn in their gar­ners.” But it is to be recollected that the monks were every where, for ages, the improvers themselves, and the instruc­tors of others in the useful arts. Even Iona had its orchards in the rugged times of the ninth century, till the *Vikinghr,* or pirate kings, ravaged and ruined all. Looking to their shipping, we find that their little vessels were constructed by covering a keel of wood and a frame of wicker work with the skins of cattle and of deer. These were denomi­nated *currachs.* Afterwards they were enlarged and made capable of containing a respectable crew. It was in a ves­sel of this description, a wicker boat covered with hides, that Columba, accompanied by twelve of his friends, embarked from Ireland, in the year 563, and landed in Iona. With these few remarks, we close the Scottish period of our na­tional history.

Sect. IV.—*Scoto-Saxon Period.*

We have already seen, that the death of Malcolm Canmore at Alnwick gave rise to a temporary usurpation of the throne by Donald his brother, that he was expelled by Duncan, an illegitimate son of Malcolm, who had been educated at the court of William Rufus; and this Duncan having been assassinated, Edgar Atheling led an English army into Scotland, and placed Edgar, the son of Malcolm Canmore', on the throne.

Edgar’s reign wasbrief, pacific, and of little interest; but his successor, Alexander the First, the eldest surviving son of Malcolm, was a prince of a powerful and vigorous character. From his accession to the throne, in the commencement of the twelfth century, (1106), to the death of Alexander the Third (1285), in the close of the thirteenth, a period little short of two centuries, the nation was progressive and pros­perous in a degree unequalled during the whole course of its future history. Under a succession of six monarchs, Alexander the First, David the First, Malcolm the Fourth, William the Lion, Alexander the Second, and Alexander the Third, it maintained its independence against foreign aggression, and not only preserved the integrity, but extend­ed the boundaries of its dominions. Its commerce, its ma­nufactures, its agriculture, and all the arts which improve and humanize an ignorant and fierce people, were encour­aged; and throughout this long period, in the personal cha­racters of each of these successive princes, though varying in their shades, there was that ingredient of energy and boldness which communicated itself to their people, and maintained the nation at the standard to which each ruler in his turn had raised it.

Let us for a moment pursue our system, and like a tra­veller gazing from a mountain height, and noting the land­marks of a new country, endeavour to detect the leading and influential events in this division of our national his­tory. In the character of Alexander the First, every thing seems to have been in excess; but happily the qua­

lities which were so overcharged, were most of them of the better sort. He is traditionally remembered by the epithet of the *fierce ;* and though humble and courteous to his clergy, whom he deemed entitled to this homage as God’s servants, not his, he was, to use the words of an an­cient and authentic writer, “ terrible beyond measure to his subjects.” The leading event of his reign was the struggle which he maintained for the independence of the Scottish church against the pretended rights claimed, first by the see of York, and afterwards by that of Canterbury. On the election of Turgot, a monk of Durham, to the bishop­ric of St. Andrews ( 1109,) the archbishop of York insist­ing on his having the right of consecrating him. To this the Scottish king declared he would never agree; and a compromise having taken place, by which the point was left undecided, Alexander, on the death of Turgot, altered his ground, and chose for his successor Eadmer, a monk of Canterbury. The same right of consecration, and founded on the same ground of the alleged dependence of the Scot­tish church upon the primacy of England, was now advan­ced by Canterbury; but it was still more haughtily and pe­remptorily refused by Alexander. A compromise again took place. Eadmer accepted the ring from the king, and took the pastoral staff from the altar, as if receiving it from the Lord; but finding his authority weakened, and the coun­tenance of the monarch withdrawn from him, he intimated his resolution of repairing to Canterbury for advice. This Alexander violently opposed, declaring that as long as he lived, the bishop of St. Andrews should never be subject to that see. Nor did he fail here, as in all his other enter­prises, to keep his word ; Eadmer remained an elected but unconsecrated bishop. At length weary of the contest, and trammelled in his usefulness, he desired permission to resign, restored the ring to the king, replaced the pastoral staff on the high altar, and returned to Canterbury. Robert, prior of Scone, was elected to fill the vacant see, and the king’s determined efforts to maintain the independence of the Scottish church were crowned with success. It had con­tinued for fourteen years, and Alexander survived its ter­mination only a single year. He died in 1124, leaving no children by his wife Sybilla, a natural daughter of Henry the First, and was succeeded by his brother, David the First.

Edgar, the brother of this prince, had, on his death-bed, bequeathed to him that portion of Cumberland which was possessed by the Scottish kings. The legacy had two good effects. It called the young prince early to the cares and labours of administration ; and it removed him from Scot­land to a country where he became acquainted with a more advanced civilization and with better regulated govern­ment. These advantages were not thrown away upon David. His natural dispositions were excellent; his love of justice, his capacity for labour, his sense of the national ho­nour and independence, his affection to every class of his people, his tenderness to his children, his piety to God, were all so conspicuous in his character, that Buchanan, an author who cannot be suspected of adulation, pronounces him the perfect exemplar of a good king; and the progress made by the country during the twenty-nine years of his reign goes far to justify the assertion.

His reign was contemporary with that of Henry the First and of Stephen in England, and it opened with many diffi­culties. The question of the independence of the church was again started ; and before it could be brought to a termination, the forcible seizure of the English crown by Stephen, who deposed Matilda, the daughter of Henry the First, involved him in a war with that usurper. During the life of Henry the First, David and Stephen had sworn

**@@@1 Liber de Melroιe, vol. i. p. 95.**