

Scottish Ecclesiastical Dress

The Cassock

THE cassock may be regarded in Scotland as the second part of the ministerial garb after the gown, for it is rarely that the two are not found together. It was not always so. The gown can be traced in use from before the Reformation up to the present day, but it is different with the cassock. Though probably it has a longer ancestry than the other its career has not been continuous. While it survived the Reformation and also the overturn of Episcopacy in 1638, it appears to have faded away almost completely after the Revolution, though it is doubtful if it was used in many churches for twenty years before that event. Its use was revived among us about eighty years ago.

The cassock is not properly speaking a liturgical garment at all. The great Roman Catholic scholar, Dom E. A. Roulin, O.S.B., in his well known manual of liturgical art entitled *Vestments and Vesture*, informs us that, though the cassock is not a liturgical vestment, a recent discussion in his own church regarding the garments of servers and choir boys had almost led him to put a section in his book regarding cassocks. But as this would have been a "digression from his proper subject" he did not do so.

The cassock was for many years before the Reformation the "walking out" dress of all clergy. Indeed for centuries it appears to have been in one form or another the common dress of all men, as the well known picture of Dante shows. In the days of the Medieval Church it was not worn by the officiating ministers at Mass, its place being taken by the Alb; but it was one of the vestments which made up what was called the "choir habit", *i.e.*, the dress worn by the minister at such services as Holy Baptism, Marriage, the Burial of the Dead. In the Cathedral of Wells there is the tomb of Dean Husee who died in 1305. A panel shows a clergyman, doubtless the Dean himself, wearing along with other vestments a cassock. A number of other examples are to be found in fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts.

Among the effects handed over to Prior Nisbet at Coldingham Priory in 1446, there were three cassocks. One of them is simply termed "1 cassock", which we may take as meaning a black one. Another is described as a "white cassock with stars interwoven with silk"; while the third was a red cassock which may have been for festivals or used by a Doctor of Divinity. The Holyrood portrait of Cardinal Beaton shows him wearing a cassock.

The Reformers continued to wear this garment; but after their day there is not a great deal of evidence for its continued use in our land. This may in part at least be due to the fact that the ordinary dress of the period is one of the last things a historian thinks worth mentioning. (It would be difficult to find in either of the *Statistical Accounts* of Scotland any reference as to whether the minister wore a gown in the pulpit). In 1610 James VI. issued injunctions to Bishops and Doctors of Divinity to wear "cassikins syde to the knee". These "cassikins" were short cassocks, though Cunningham in his *Church History of Scotland* calls them stockings. The aprons worn by Bishops and Deans south of the Tweed are relics of the short cassocks formerly worn. It may be said that, while there was objection to the King's action in interfering with the affairs of the Church, there seems to have been no objection to what was ordered. From a later petition to Charles I. we learn that the greater part of the injunction of the king simply confirmed the ordinary usages of the time. Whether this applied to the wearing of the cassock is, unfortunately, not stated.

In the General Assembly Library is an engraving of Robert Trail who was Chaplain to the Scots Forces at Marston Moor and elsewhere. He was ordained at Elie in Fife in 1639 and was banished from Scotland in 1663 for his covenanting ways. In the engraving he is represented as wearing gown, cassock and bands. It is now generally believed that all the extant paintings and engravings of Alexander Henderson, the Moderator of the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638, are based on the engraving made by Hollar in London in 1641. The painting ascribed to Van Dyck, now at Yester, is an excellent piece of work, and on it as well as on that of Hollar it is clearly shown that Henderson was then wearing a cassock as well as a gown and ruff. Robert Baillie in one of his letters refers to Patrick Gillespie (brother of the better-known George) preaching before the Protector (Oliver Cromwell), "in his

velvet rarelie cut cassick". Gillespie was at first a Covenanter, but he afterwards threw in his lot with the Cromwellian party. He is said to have been the first Scottish minister who prayed for Cromwell by name in public worship. He would have been executed after the Restoration, but saved himself by making an abject apology.

One of the most interesting stories regarding a cassock is that told by William Row regarding one which belonged to his father-in-law, Robert Blair, the well known covenanting minister of St Andrews, from which he was "outed" in 1661. He was commissioned in 1632 by some covenanting ministers who had been dismissed from their parishes because they would not conform to the ways of the Bishops to plead their cause with King Charles I. Row tells us that Blair had letters of introduction to some of the courtiers, but that he could not get access to them because of his dress "which was the habit of Puritan ministers, as they were then called". Evidently he was advised to get a cassock, which he did, and considering that it was "a grave and suitable habit for a churchman, Mr Blair put it on and by that means got access". This raised some resentment in the mind of an Anglican churchman, who asked the Scots minister what he was going to do with the cassock after he left the Court. To which Blair replied that he would keep it for seven years and then make it after another mode. Thereafter he would wear it where the Anglican would be frightened to come; which thing, Row tells us, came to pass. The cassock was made into a riding coat, and in 1639 Blair was one of the ministers with the Scottish forces at Dunse Law where he appeared wearing the cassock coat. So his prophecy was fulfilled.

Archbishop Sharp, while he was yet minister of Crail, had his portrait painted by Lely about the time of the Restoration, when he was in London. He was then wearing the cassock. A somewhat later portrait, painted when he was Archbishop, shows him wearing a cassock girded with a cincture.

So far as one can judge from the portraits of post-Revolution ministers of the Church of Scotland, cassocks ceased to be generally worn after that event. In England we know it continued to be worn until about the beginning of the nineteenth century; but even there its use became more restricted as the years went past, though it continued to be part of the Court dress of the clergy and was also used by the University Preachers. The revival of the cassock in

England came about the middle of the nineteenth century as a sort of by-product of the Oxford movement. It was a little later before its use was revived in Scotland, except very occasionally. A miniature of Bishop Walker of Edinburgh, Primus of the Episcopal Church, shows him wearing a cassock along with his gown, bands and hood. He died in 1841 and must have been among the first, if not the very first, to adopt this vestment north of the Tweed in the nineteenth century. In 1872 Dean Stanley of Westminster preached in St Andrew's Parish Church and the minister, the well known A. K. H. Boyd, tells us that the Dean wore similar garments to those worn by Scots ministers, gown, bands and hood. Nothing is said about a cassock which evidently neither the Dean nor the Doctor wore. A little earlier than this Dr. Norman Macleod had taken to wearing a cassock. In a photograph taken *circa* 1870, he is shown wearing a long cassock with a cincture. He also wears the badge of office of the Dean of the Order of the Thistle to which he was appointed in 1869. But even among leaders of the Church its absence was not unknown. Dr. Milligan, who was Moderator in 1882, and Dr. Charteris who held that position ten years later, are both shown in their photographs as wearing the gown over ordinary clerical dress.

The cassock formerly was almost always made of ribbed silk, but this is not necessary and a cheaper type of garment has become more popular.

The colour is nearly always black. Royal Chaplains may wear a scarlet cassock and some of them do. By ancient custom a Doctor of Divinity may wear a red cassock, and the University of St Andrews prescribes for its graduates holding that degree a single-breasted cassock with purple buttons. The purple cassocks worn by some Anglican Bishops were revived about 1890, the first to wear one being Bishop King of Lincoln. In Scotland cassocks are usually double-breasted and reach to the ankles. There is no doubt, however, that the earlier ones were much shorter. We learn from Dr. Percy Dearmer that the cassock worn by Bluecoat School boys is the medieval cassock in almost its original form and, as every one knows, it does not come much below the knee. The canons of the Church of England (1603-4) state that the clergy were to wear cassocks, but not light coloured stockings, which implies that with an ordinary cassock their stockings would be visible. King James too ordered that cassikins were to be

worn "to the knee". The tailor's bill of a Georgian Bishop, Yorke of Ely (1781-1808), was recently made public and it shows that in 1796 he had got five short cassocks made and two long ones. Macalister, writing about sixty years ago, says that the Presbyterian cassock is an ugly garment which rarely reached below the knees. So that the short cassock is not the modern tailor's invention, as some call it.

The ordinary clerical coat is really another form of cassock. Tyack says that the cassock began to be modified for secular use, becoming shorter until it hardly reached the knees; "finally the cassock was allowed to hang unbuttoned save at the throat. And thus the clerical coat of to-day was gradually evolved".

The Scarf

The scarf is a strip of black cloth or silk, worn round the neck, with the ends hanging down in front to about a foot from the bottom of the cassock. It is now worn by quite a number of ministers of the Church of Scotland, its use having been revived about half a century ago. It is part of the Court Dress of the clergy of all denominations and is worn by Royal Chaplains, as well as by Chaplains to H. M. Forces.

There are several theories regarding its origin. Some think that it is the remnant of the black cope which was worn at one time by all Clerks in Holy Orders and which was gradually curtailed until only the scarf was left. Others derive it from the hood which at one time had a strip of cloth hanging from the hood proper. This was called the *liripip* which was wound round the neck when necessity required, as must often have happened when the clergy were officiating in winter in unheated churches. In this connection it may be noted that the graduates of Continental Universities do not as a rule wear hoods; but instead they wear scarves over their gowns. Another theory connects the scarf with the *Almuce* or *Amess* (not to be confused with the *Amice*) which was originally a hood lined with fur. Several grave slabs in the Cathedrals of Aberdeen and Dunkeld, as well as one in the old churchyard of Arisaig, show the figures of ecclesiastics wearing such. These are depicted as wearing the fur *almuce* over their heads and from the ends there hang down pendants, probably the tails of the animals from whose fur the *almuces* had been made. The scarf or *tippet*, as it was called, was sometimes lined with fur. In the *Ledger* of Andrew Halyburton,

which was published fully eighty years ago under the editorship of Dr. Cosmo Innes, there are the accounts of some Scottish churchmen, including among others the Archbishop and the Archdeacon of St Andrews. It is interesting to read of the ecclesiastical articles, frontals, chalices, gowns, etc., which were sent to this country in the years 1492-1503. Halyburton was the "Conservator" of the Privileges of the Scottish Nation in the "Low Countries" and in addition carried on an extensive business on his own account. Among the articles supplied to Scotsmen were some "Tepats", at least one of which was made of velvet and lined with "martyrkis". It cost, with the "makyn and furyn", twenty-six shillings.

It is interesting to note that there is reason to believe that this "vestment" was used by the great Reformer, John Knox. James Melville, nephew of the better known Andrew, tells us that when he was a student at St Andrews he used to see Knox go to church "with a furring of martrix about his neck". Knox had no objections to wearing the "tippet of sables", which is still worn by the Bishops of the Church of England. What is believed to be an almost contemporary woodcut of George Buchanan, the medieval scholar, shows him wearing what is almost certainly an almuce. He was Principal of St Leonard's College, St Andrews, and Moderator of the General Assembly of 1567 (not as a layman, as is sometimes alleged, but in virtue of his being Principal of the College and Minister of the Parish of St Leonards). The tippet continued to be used in academic circles, for an old print of Andrew Melville shows him wearing a gown with a scarf round his neck.

The "black crapes" which King James enjoined Bishops and Doctors of Divinity to wear were what would now be called scarves, and a contemporary portrait of Bishop W. Forbes (1585-1634) shows that he wore such. Few ministers of the Church of Scotland have had statues erected to their memory; but one of the few was William Adair, Minister of Ayr (1646-1682) who suffered for his covenanting views. On his statue the scarf is quite prominent, though in shape it rather resembles the "pall" of an Archbishop.

After the Revolution the scarf fell completely out of use and was not revived, so far as ministers of the National Church were concerned, until our own times. When Dean Stanley preached at St Andrews in the seventies of last century Dr. Boyd states that the Dean wore "vestments" similar to those used by Scots ministers and adds that the

Dean wore what they did not wear, a scarf of crape. A photograph of the late Professor Cooper, taken in 1900, shows him wearing the scarf; perhaps a little earlier is that of Dr. Paton of Dumfries (taken with his Kirk Session), which shows him wearing a scarf that appears to have been of a different kind of silk than his gown. Moderators of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland have worn the scarf from the nineties of last century, but in the United Free Church Assembly it was not introduced until 1925, when it was worn by the late Principal W. M. Macgregor. In the words of the chronicler, the late Rev. G. M. Reith, "he introduced a new gadget—if I may call it so—in the Moderator's garb by wearing a long black stole, the significance of which eluded the curiosity of the inquisitive. It seems, however, that the stole is part of the full dress of a Doctor of Divinity,—in England at anyrate"; a statement which shows that a little learning may be a mis-leading thing.

The question of the ornamentation of the scarf is one on which opinions differ. Some would have none at all, except perhaps in the case of Chaplains to the Forces. But if these may be ornamented why not others? Most of the Moderators who have worn the scarf have had it ornamented with the "Chi-Rho" symbol or a cross, generally a St Andrews Cross, in purple or gold. One can understand the scarf being left un-ornamented in England, where it is always worn against the white surplice, and so is easily discerned. But in Scotland, if not ornamented it can hardly be seen at all. There is one form of ornamentation, however, which even the purists themselves practise. If a minister wishes to wear decorations, medals or ribbons with ecclesiastical dress, he places these on his scarf.

In a work dealing with ecclesiastical symbols (as well as others) written some thirty-five years ago, the writer made the suggestion that it would be more in keeping with the traditions of Presbyterianism if the scarves worn by the Moderators of the General Assembly were blue. No one paid any attention to the suggestion, but it is at least possible that such may yet be introduced. Probably all that is required is for some minister to make a start. At present, as has been said, the black scarf is practically invisible against the black gown and if the scarf were blue this would not be the case. Blue is the Scottish colour and is specially associated with Presbyterianism even in its

more extreme forms as exemplified by the Covenanters. "True-blue Presbytery" is proverbial.

It is not yet fifty years since the then Chaplain General, Bishop Taylor Smith, had the Army Chaplains' scarf ornamented with the Imperial crown and the letters "C. F.", which some Anglo-Catholics interpreted as "Catholic Faith" much to his dislike, for he was an extremely "low" churchman. If he could alter an age-long tradition and have that alteration accepted everywhere without any protest, there seems no reason why others might not do so as well. The writer remembers seeing in a parish church in the south-west of Scotland about a quarter of a century ago a minister wearing a purple stole when conducting an evening service. Such a thing was irregular, as the stole should be used only when administering a sacrament, but the touch of purple in the pulpit (the minister had no hood) added that bit of colour which is so often needed in our churches.

The introduction of coloured scarves would be another link with our Reformed brethren on the Continent. There hoods form no part of University costume, and scarves are worn instead. These scarves are always coloured. Each University has its own colour, blue among others. They hang over one shoulder and the degree of the wearer is shown by rows of ermine fur, at each end. Doctors wear three rows, licentiates two rows, and bachelors one.

I have seen it in print that while a minister should wear a silk scarf a probationer should wear a stuff one. On what basis this distinction is made I cannot tell. According to ecclesiastical tradition, silk scarves should be used only by University graduates, stuff ones by ministers who are not graduates. The probationer is not a minister and so should not, if the usual rule be followed, wear a scarf at all. In any case he is quite as likely to be a graduate as is a minister.

The Bands

Most people know that the bands which are worn by preachers show that their wearer has been ordained. Indeed the bands are the only article of ministerial dress which distinguishes the minister from the probationer. The bands are undoubtedly of medieval origin, though whether that origin is civil or ecclesiastical is in dispute. Some regard them as simply the last vestiges of the big white tudor collars, which were a marked feature of lay dress in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But there is no doubt that something very like bands and not tudor collars

were worn by some of the clergy in pre-Reformation times. An effigy of a priest in Sanquhar Church, in Nithsdale, shows the cleric wearing what looks very like bands. The date is late fifteenth century. On the statue of the Provost (so-called) of the Church of Ceres, which is of a little later date, a pair of bands are quite conspicuous. At Christ's Hospital, London (commonly called the Blue Coat school), the boys have worn bands and blue cassocks since its foundation in 1550.

Nor were they worn after the Reformation by the Protestant clergy only. The Holyrood portrait of Cardinal Beaton shows him with a white collar the ends of which might be taken for a pair of bands. There is still extant a fine portrait of Cardinal Norfolk, a grandson of Thomas, Earl of Arundel. This shows him in his Cardinal's robes wearing a pair of somewhat broad bands. The engraved portrait of Cardinal Dubois (1656-1723), after the painting by Regaud, shows that he also wore them.

Others hold that the bands had an ecclesiastical origin. The late Professor Cooper once told the writer that in his view the bands should be regarded as relics of the monks of other days. He thought that they were to be regarded as the successors of the "bibs" which were worn by bearded monks to keep the front of their cassocks clean. Ingenious, even if there is little evidence to support such a theory. Some connect them with the Amice, one of the Mass vestments. This was one of the latest of such vestments to come into use and consisted originally of a strip of linen placed round the neck. This was probably simply to keep the chasuble from being soiled through contact with the skin. "In the Tudor period", says Tyack in *Historic Dress of the Clergy* "it was transformed into a neck cloth with long ends, which in course of time became the clerical bands". It is thought by some that this was the original cause of the modern fashion of wearing white round the neck. Symbolically the bands are said to represent the cloven tongues of fire, which were observed at Pentecost, a significance which is also attributed to the points of a Bishop's mitre.

We know that bands were in use in Reformed circles in England as early as 1566, when they are referred to in a letter sent by Miles Coverdale to Theodore Beza; but it is some time later before we meet with any reference to their use in Scotland by Reformed ministers. In his *Autobiography* Robert Blair tells us that in 1599 he was in

church at Irvine, when an English minister entered the pulpit. He had been deprived by his Bishop of his cure and was on his way to Ireland. Of him Blair says " His countenance and his band the like whereof I had not formerly seen drew my eyes to gaze upon him ". Evidently at that period bands were not used in Irvine, though the then minister, Alexander Scrimgeour, does not appear to have had any objections to another minister wearing them. The painting of John Bell, son of the John Bell who preached at the opening of the Glasgow Assembly in 1638, shows him wearing a pair of rather broad bands. In Burton's *Wars in England, Scotland and Ireland* there is an engraving showing the scene in St. Giles' on the occasion of the " Jenny Geddes " riot. The occupant of the pulpit is wearing bands. Wodrow tells an interesting story of Robert Blair when he was Minister of St Andrews (1639-1661). A man appeared to him garbed as a minister, with " black coat and band ", and tried to seduce him from the right way. This was the Devil, who was apparently wearing the usual dress of a minister of that time.

From the time of Blair onwards there is ample evidence that both in England and in Scotland the bands continued to be used. A portrait (by Lely) shows that such were worn by Archbishop Sharp, while still minister at Crail ; as well as by James Guthrie, the covenanting minister at Stirling, who was the first to suffer for his faith after the Restoration. There is a curious story told of Bishop Paterson of Edinburgh (1679-1687). He is said to have got the nickname of " Bishop Bandstrings ", because when preaching in St Giles' on one occasion he kissed his hands to let a lady in the congregation know that he was thinking of her.

The Revolution brought changes to the Church, but none in the wearing of bands. We find that they continued in use with Episcopalians as well as Presbyterians. The portraits of two contemporary ministers, Principal Robertson of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh, and Dean John Skinner of Aberdeen, author of *Tullochgorum*, show both ministers with bands, and those of the Principal are the more " ecclesiastical " of the two. Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits* are rich in the figures of the ministers of his day. Most of these are shown wearing bands, though in most cases without gowns ; the portraits are usually taken in outdoor dress. Thus Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk is shown in a riding coat wearing bands and having a riding switch in his hands.

Dr. Walker of Colinton, who was also Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, is in "walking out" dress with bands and carries a small bunch of flowers.

Among the Seceders the bands do not seem to have been so popular. The portraits of Ebenezer Erskine (1680-1754), James Fisher (1697-1793), and Alexander Moncrieff (1695-1761), show all three in clerical attire with wigs. They do not wear bands, but have on white scarves, with the ends falling in front of their coats. Ralph Erskine (1685-1752), was of a less hard nature than his colleagues and this showed even in his dress, for he wore gown and bands like his brethren in the National Church. Sir Walter Scott in *Guy Mannering* mentions that Dr. John Erskine, the leader of the Evangelical Party in the Church in the 18th century preached in ordinary clerical attire without a gown, but with a "tumbled band". In those days the singular "band" was used where now we use the plural "bands".

The Cameronians did not wear gowns; but the portrait of John MacMillan, son of John of Balmaghie, the first post-Revolution minister of that body, shows him wearing bands, the ends of which are tucked under the lapels of his clerical coat.

In the Church of England, as we have seen, the use of bands survived the Reformation and there is no doubt that they have continued in use to the present day South of the Tweed. The effigy of Archbishop Sheldon of Canterbury, who died in 1677, has the bands, as has also the portrait of Archbishop Drummond of York (1761-1766), probably the first Scotsman to become an Archbishop in England. Another Scots Bishop, Burnet of Salisbury, who had been Minister at Saltoun, also wore them, and they seem to have been part of the dress of many (if not all) of the Bishops of the Second Episcopacy in Scotland. They were in regular use in England to the middle of the nineteenth century and as a matter of fact they were always used by the Royal Chaplains when they preached before Queen Victoria. Now they are worn as a mark of dignity by the Canons of some Cathedrals, *e.g.*, Liverpool and Manchester. English bands are like our own though I have seen a pair with embroidered ends on the tomb of a clergyman in an English Cathedral. They were used in the Scots Episcopal Church up to comparatively recently.

The painting by Orpen of Archbishop Lang, painted in 1924, shows him in full canonicals, with bands; and in the *Church Times* of 4th November, 1949, there are pictures

of three Bishops consecrated in Westminster Abbey on All Saints' Day—Peterborough, Kensington and Borneo. All three wear bands, which in every case are worn over the hood.

Bands are also in use in the Roman Catholic Church. French clergy wear black bands (sometimes blue) with white edges. Such were in use in the time of Cardinal Richelieu, for a fine portrait of that famous churchman shows him wearing a pair of "rabats", as the French call them. Bands quite indistinguishable from ours are worn by the members of some brotherhoods in the Roman Catholic Church. They form part of the official dress of Huguenot and Dutch pastors, and of some Lutheran ministers. They are also a part of clerical Court dress in our own land. Outwith the church they are worn by English barristers, but, despite statements to the contrary, they are not worn by Scots advocates, except occasionally, when senior counsel appear in the House of Lords.

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