

**THE BAXTER BOOKS OF ST.  
ANDREWS: A  
RECORD OF THREE  
CENTURIES, PP. III - XLI**

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The Baxter Books of St. Andrews: A Record of Three Centuries, pp. iii - xli by J. H. Macadam

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**J. H. MACADAM**

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# THE BAXTER BOOKS OF ST. ANDREWS.

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A RECORD OF THREE CENTURIES.

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With an Introduction and Notes by

J. H. MACADAM, F.S.A. (SCOT.),

Editor, "British Baker."

*'Das Bäckergewerbe habe schon seit vielen Jahrhunderten als achtbar dargestanden, und auch wir wollen darnach trachten, ihm Ehre zu machen. Ein jedes Mitglied sei verpflichtet ein gottesfürchtiges Leben zu führen und seine Gesellen und Lehrlinge ebenfalls dazu anzuhalten, in den Sitzungen des Gewerks friedlich zu berathen, bei gegenseitiger Klage dieselbe mit Bescheidenheit anzubringen, und sich pünktlich zu den Sitzungen einzufinden, überhaupt Alles zu thun, was die Ehre und den Nutzen des Gewerks auf eine ernstliche weise fördern könne.'*—Minute Book of the Bakers of Stettin, 3rd May 1730.

*Have they not seen and wept over all the comedy and tragedy of an ecclesiastical metropolis, thrown up to rot piecemeal on the rocks of time? All the rolling, commingling tide of trivial and substantial—meditative teacher, scheming ecclesiastic, golfing aristocrat, shrieking fishwife, budding poet, earnest student, rolling along decade after decade, over the old streets, under the shadow of the old wall-flowers, to the moaning music of the old far-sounding sea.—J. Campbell Smith.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE records of the minutes of the proceedings of the Incorporation of Bakers of St. Andrews extend from 3rd June 1548 to 15th November 1861. They form an almost continuous connection between the pre-Reformation days and our own. When the first-recorded meeting was being held in the Gallowayk the English overran the country, which still suffered from the disastrous effects of Pinkie, and in a few days after that meeting the fleet of D'Essé sailed past the town, to return with the Queen to France to become its Queen in due time for a short and happy period. When the records end, her descendant—a happier and more fortunate Queen—had reigned over a united England and Scotland for well-nigh a generation. There is a peculiar fitness in the records opening under Mary and terminating under Victoria. When the respectable burgesses of 1548 were transacting their corporate business Shakespeare had not been born, Scotland was a rude and distracted country, where the evils of the minority of a Sovereign, and that Sovereign a female, were felt in all their terrible force. Exactly two years before the records open the astonished bakers were numbered among the clamorous townspeople who demanded to see the body of the murdered Cardinal lowered from the Castle window, dressed in the pontifical robes, after 'the judgment and work of God' had been gravely accomplished by the last thrusts of James Melville's sword. The dawning light of the Reformation was creeping into the minds of the St. Andrews tradesmen, but many of them would turn away with grim thoughts that bright Spring morning, feeling instinctively that after-years would echo the yet unspoken verdict of Sir David Lindsay of The Mount:—

'Although the loon be well away,  
The deed was foully done.'

But even as they turned away with dire forebodings some of those whose experience went back for eighteen years could tell of the dark February day when the pile of the gentle and cultured Patrick Hamilton became a light to lighten the benighted land:—

*Vivus lucis qui fulserat igne  
Par erat, ut moriens lumina ab igne daret.*

And they could tell of the phenomenon of how, when a baker named Myrton, he who probably was elected Deacon in 1549, 'ran and brought his arms full of straw and cast it into the fire; whereupon there came a blast of wind from the east, forth of the sea, and raised the flame of fire so vehemently that it blew upon the friar who had accused him, and threw him upon the ground, burning all the forepart of his cowl.' Many of them, too, would be spared for ten years after the first-recorded meeting to see, in 1558, the burning of Walter Mill, the last Roman Catholic martyr, in 'a fire biggit on the north side of the abbey kirk, on the high land.'

Stirring as were the stormy scenes immediately before, at the time, and immediately after, the minutes begin, as interesting were many of the events which were witnessed by the bakers whose peaceful and trading interests are recorded here. Except for one or two references, no indications are given of the wild waves of civil, religious, and political history that surged so strongly over the ancient city; yet it is interesting to think of the connection that these men had through the three centuries with great historic events, and to think that as they left their shops and bakehouses they went to look upon the faces and forms of men and women whose names stand up so strangely and so powerfully before us. The opening minute is of the date June 1548, thirteen months before John Knox, Balnaves of Halhill, James Melville, and others who had held the Castle against the Regent and her French troops, were led to the French ships, and thence to the galleys. For a few years the graceful towers of the Cathedral reared against the sun as it disappeared behind gold and purple banks, but when Knox returned probably



some of the craft went with the populace that 'dung them doon;' many of them must have listened to the trumpet tones of the Reformer, and some would hear him expound even on that day when, wearing his furring of matriks and with staff in hand, he was assisted by honest Richard Ballantyne from the Abbey to the Town Kirk. One loves to think of the historic scenes that those honest burgess bakers saw, generation after generation, and the great actors in them as they rode up the narrow streets of old St. Andrews. Parliaments and Assemblies were held within its walls, Kings and Princes were entertained, priests and nobles schemed and plotted, poor students and renowned *savants* met in stern debate, whilst the bakers peacefully carried on their trade, took apprentices, discussed their grievances, married, submitted themselves to Church discipline, and died. Those whose trade deeds are first recorded saw the pageantry when the fair Mary of Guise came home to the gallant and ill-fated James, and felt a patriotic and possibly a personal thrill of satisfaction when it was reported that the fair bride from *la belle France* had admitted that she had never seen so many fair personages of men, women, young babes, and children as she saw that day. In 1562 they saw her daughter, flushed with her reception on her return from the Throne of France, with Bothwell in her train, and few, if any, shadows on the path that was to darken downwards to Fotheringay. They had seen the beautiful face as it flashed upon them when she lived like a bourgeois wife with her little troop in South Street. They saw, too, the execution of the gay and gallant Chastelard, who carried in his mien the bearing of his maternal grand-uncle, the Chevalier Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*. Some of them might shake their heads over *The Purpose*, and whisper to their wives and each other of the Queen's dalliance that Randolph noted to his ridiculous mistress and her court. Captain Hepburn's indiscretion was not forgotten, and, baker-like, they hinted that there could not be smoke without fire. Then, when some of them might be 'King's men' and some of them might be 'Queen's men,'

they saw the grim Regent ride down the narrow streets that summer day when he caused Alexander Macker and his six companions to be drowned for piracy, or when, a year later, and still on his mission of eradicating evils, he hung the notorious Paris for his share in the tragedy at Kirk o' Fields, and another of his own name and clan, a Lyon King at Arms, for witchcraft and necromancy, and his companion in the black art, Nic Neville. The bakers would not be greatly surprised when they heard of the murder of 'the Good Regent' as he rode through the narrow and twisted street of Linlithgow, when Bothwellhaugh's revengeful shot spread sorrow through Scotland. They saw the lion-hearted Reformer who 'never feared the face of man' tottering in his old age through the busy streets, or walking, thinking great thoughts, as the sun sank red over the sea; others of them saw the young Montrose playing golf on the Links, and riding at neck-break speed away from his lessons. Some were startled by the news when their Archbishop was hanged at even at the Mercat Cross at Stirling underneath the lines

*Cresce diu, felix arbor, semperque vireto  
Frondebis, ut nobis talia poma feras.*

Others tasted a similar fruit when the astonished burghers spoke in terror of another Archbishop punished to the death on Magus Muir. Kings and queens came often to the religious capital of their kingdom. Mary of Guise, Mary of Scotland, bright in their early years, had paid joyous visits to the grey town, that had donned her best to bid them welcome, and later the townsmen turned out to greet the grandson and son, as he came with the Regent Morton, and witnessed the gay guise when Skipper Lindsay warned the shifty Regent to dree his weird. The King came again in 1587, not led, but leading, not to a play of swords, but to one of words, bringing with him Guillaume Sallust, Sieur du Bartas, to listen to the eloquence and learning of Adamson, and the sturdy, unbending democracy of Melville. Yet again the bakers gazed on the face of the British Solomon, when he came, with saumon-like instinct, to visit his native place in

all the glory of his Britannic majesty. The magistrates of St. Andrews do not appear to have taken advantage of the Monarch's presence in the same way as did those of Edinburgh, who brought under his notice the dangerous custom of the baxters of that town storing heather and whins to heat their ovens, and the King ordered a proclamation against it. A writer, who appears to have been disgusted with the poverty of the country or more probably with having to withdraw himself from within hearing of the sound of Bow Bells, for he thought little of the country or its bread, wrote, 'Corn is reasonable plenty at this time; for, since they heard of the King's coming, it hath been as unlawful for the common people to eat wheat, as it was of old for any but the priests to eat the show-bread. . . . They would persuade the footmen that oaten cakes would make them well-winded, and the children of the chapel they have brought to eat them for the maintenance of their voices. . . . They keep no holidays, nor acknowledge any saint but St. Andrew, who, they say, got that honour by presenting Christ with an oaten cake after his forty-days' fast.'

James' grandson, Charles II., was the last kingly visitor to the cathedral city, and a baker's son, a scion of the most famous baking family connected with the place, Andrew Honeyman, received him on his arrival. The Honeyman family we will meet with often, from 1564 in unbroken continuity to 1789, but we may take our sole glance at its most famous representative here. Whilst the baking branch of the family was maintaining its connection with the craft of St. Andrews, through sons succeeding fathers, another branch was doing the same in the clerical profession as ministers of the parish of Kinneff; but the most famous descendant of the first baker progenitor was Andrew Honeyman, Bishop of Orkney. The information about his life is scanty, and the scattered references to his character and actions are not too complimentary. He is not mentioned in any of the Scottish biographical dictionaries. The poem on Master James Sharpe, in the *Analecta Scotica*, refers to Honeyman as having