

Original Documents.

By the kindness of the Rev. the Warden and Fellows of Winchester College, through the Rev. W. H. Gunner, we are enabled to print the following charter of Ilbert de Laci, "founder of the castle and honour of Pontefract," which is preserved among their muniments. It is in many respects a valuable document; we learn from it the name of Ilbert's wife, and the fact that he survived his son Hugh^a. It possesses also additional curiosity from being attested by the signs manual of William the Conqueror, of Ilbert and of Hadrude his wife. Of the two first, and of the seal, fac-similes are here given.

Si Willelmus regis

S. h. lta



SEAL OF ILBERT DE LACI.

^a Thus furnishing an addition to the pedigree of Laci, given in Hunter's South Yorkshire, vol. i. p. 332.

“Notum sit omnibus Christianis tam viventibus quam futuris quod ego Hilbertus de Laceio una cum Hadrude uxore mea do mansionem tuisuicz Sancte Trinitati de monte rotomagensi. terram scilicet cum aqua et pratis et silvis omnibusque ad ipsam mansionem attinentibus pro anima mea atque domini mei Wilielmi regis et animabus parentum et amicorum meorum. nec non et uxoris mee. filiique mei Hugonis. pro eo quod et ipse supradictus filius meus . . . in loco requiescit et decimam de fraite villa.”

Endorsed, in a hand of the thirteenth century,

“Anglia. Anglia.”

and again, in writing, apparently, of the fourteenth century,

“Hilbertus de Laceio de nemore
Anglie de Thisuic.”

TRANSLATION.

“Be it known unto all Christians as well living as future, that I Hilbert de Laci together with Hadrude my wife do give the mansion^b of Tuisuicz unto the Holy Trinity of Mont-Rouen; the land to wit, with water and meadows and woods and all things to the same mansion belonging, for my soul and [the soul] of my lord king William, and the souls of my parents and friends, as also of my wife and of my son Hugh, for that also that he my son above-named resteth in [that] place; and the tithe of Freteval.”

The abbey of Mount St. Catharine, near Rouen, to which this grant was made, was founded in A.D. 1030^c. We have not been able to discover the locality of the wood of “Tuisuicz,” or “Thisuic,” although it may be inferred, from the endorsement, that it was in England^d. Freteval, the tithe of which is granted, was probably the small town of that name in France, situated in La Beauce, upon the river Loir. It is worthy of remark, that Robert de Laci, son of Ilbert, in the charter by which he founded the priory of Pontefract, mentions his mother by the name of “Hawisia^e,” whereas in this document she is called Hadrude.

^b Mansio is used in the Latin text in a sense corresponding to the old French, *manse* or *mesnil*, a farm or homestead.

^c Neustria Pia, p. 405.

^d The priory of Blythe, in Nottinghamshire, was a dependency of the abbey of

Mount St. Catharine, but no name resembling “Thisuic” occurs in the enumeration of its lands given in the Monasticon, vol. iv. p. 626.

^e Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. v. p. 120.

It will be observed that the seal appended to the charter is in remarkable preservation. The rider is represented, apparently, without any defensive covering for the head^f; bearing on his left arm a kite-shaped shield, of large size; he wears a prycke spur, and is seated on a high curved saddle.

The attestation of this grant by the hand of the Conqueror calls for a few remarks. It was usual among the French sovereigns of the Merovingian and Carolingian races to subscribe their own more important diplomata with a cross, and occasionally with a monogram; the latter form, adopted by Charlemagne, continued in use until the reign of Philip the Third^g. This practice was customary also in England under our Saxon sovereigns; the royal mark being followed by the subscriptions of numerous witnesses to the act^h. It was rarely, however, that in early times the sovereign in either country affixed his mark to charters granted by subjects. The French kings of the third race appear to have been the first who used this formality, and the deed under consideration is probably contemporary with a charter of Burchard, comte de Corbeil, dated 1071, attested by the hand of Philip the Firstⁱ. William the Conqueror adopted the ordinary forms of French diplomacy; the foundation charter of Battle Abbey is subscribed by him^k; but it is believed there is no other instance known than the present of his attestation of the charter of a subject. Indeed, after the Conquest it is rare to find any personal mark either in royal charters or private deeds: a few of the latter description, of various dates, exist, purporting to have been marked *propria manu*; but in this country the general use of seals entirely superseded, for many centuries, the custom of manual subscription.

T. HUDSON TURNER.

^f Unless indeed that which appears to be a very long nose is the projection of the nasal head-piece of the eleventh century.—See Meyrick's *Critical Enquiry*, &c., vol. i. p. 10. Mr. De la Motte's drawing is faithful to the original.

^g Mabillon de *Re Diplomatica*, lib. ii. cap. x.

^h See Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticum ævi Saxonici*, *passim*.

ⁱ Mabillon, *ut supra*, cap. xxi.

^k *Cart. Antiq. Mus. Brit.* 83 A. 12; printed in the *Monasticon*, vol. iii. p. 244. Several of the early charters of the Conqueror exist bearing his mark.