

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE, ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY.

By SIR HENRY H. HOWORTH, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., F.R.S., F.S.A.

PART I. *The so-called "Peterborough Chronicle" or MS. E.*

The most important document for the history of early England is undoubtedly the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and although it has been frequently edited and more than once with marked patience, learning and skill, there still remains a good deal to be done in the way of describing its contents and analysing its sources, in the sense in which the *Fontes* of German history have been sifted. Surely no document deserves such treatment better, nor do I know a fitter place in which to discuss it than the *Archaeological Journal*, in the earlier volumes of which such issues were most profitably discussed. I would especially mention Riley's epoch-making dissection of Ingulfus.¹ In the years 1879 and 1880 I published some letters in the *Athenaeum*, in which I ventured to urge some conclusions about the history of the text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which were then more or less new, and which were, at least in part, accepted by the latest editor of the document, Mr. Plummer. I have been pressed more than once to put on more permanent record the results of these my former and of more recent studies, and I would now venture to offer them to the Archaeological Institute.

The revival of an interest in and a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon after many centuries during which it had been in abeyance, was largely due to John Joscelyn, "an Essex man," as Strype calls him, II, 351. He styled himself "Mr. John Joscelyn," *id.* He was secretary to Archbishop Parker, and in the Parker Correspondence, *Intr. not.*, he is spoken of as "Sir Thomas Josselin's brother, an

¹ *Archaeological Journal*, xix.

antiquary in the archbishop's house who wrote the history *de Antiquitate Britannicæ Ecclesiæ*."

He not only transcribed and collated several MSS. but also composed a Saxon grammar. Among his collations ought specially to be noted those of several MSS. of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. A series of these is described in the title to MS. Cott. Tib. B. iv, 1, in the Cottonian Library, in which we read *inter alia* :

"In eo desiderabantur non ita pridem omnia ab a° 261 usque ad annum 693 quæ ex historicis Saxonis Monasteriorum ecclesiæ Christi et S. Augustini Cantuarie, Petroburgens. Aberdoniens. usque ad an 633, feliciter supplevit Johannes Josselinus. Idem vir doctus passim etiam variantes lectionis ex laudatis codicibus, cum notis, in contextu operis et in margine inseruit."¹

A few years later Laurence Noel prepared a dictionary, Saxon and English, and gave the copy to another scholar who was an excellent transcriber, namely, the Kentish antiquary, William Lambard, by whom an accurate copy on paper of the burnt Cottonian MS. Otho, B. xi, exists among Archbishop Ussher's MSS. at Dublin, while a faulty one of Cott. Tib. B. iv, by him, is in the Canterbury Cathedral Library.²

The first attempt to print an Anglo-Saxon MS. was made by Archbishop Parker, doubtless with Joscelyn's assistance. This was Asser's Life of Alfred, which professed to follow the original Latin literatim, but in Saxon characters. The idea of printing the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* apparently first occurred to Gerard Langbaine, Provost of Queen's, as appears from some of his papers now in the Bodleian. When he discovered, however, that Wheloc was engaged in the same venture he gave up his project.³ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was first actually printed at the end of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, in folio, in the year 1644, by Abraham Wheloc, professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, and he styles the work *Chronologia Anglo-Saxonica, ab an A D I ad ann 1070 cum versione Latina*. Bishop Gibson in the preface to his edition of the *Chronicle* speaks of

¹ Hardy, *Cat. Brit. Hist.*, ii, 30. A transcript of another Cott. MS., Tib. A, vi, now in the Bodleian, and labelled Laud. Misc., 661, was also made by Joscelyn.

² See Hardy, *Cat.*, i, 657.

³ See *Anc. Hist. Eng. and French*, English, 1830, p. 183.

Wheloc as having "*primus omnium praeclarum istud hujus nationis monumentum a blattis ac tineis, vindicavit.*" Wheloc's edition, the *Editio princeps* of the *Chronicle*, is still of considerable use, since it reproduces a MS. which was burnt in "The Cotton fire" of 1731. Wheloc refers to it as the Cotton MS. and it was entered in the old *Cottonian Catalogue* as MS. Otho B. xi. "The three imperfect leaves of this MS. which were saved from the fire are evidence," says Professor Earle, "of the fidelity of Wheloc's edition, and establish his text as a true representative of G; (G being the MS. which in Professor Earle's notation represents the burnt Cotton MS.) Wheloc also collated for his edition a second MS. which he calls the Benet MS.," from "Benet," the old name for C.C.C. Cambridge, to the library of which it was bequeathed by Archbishop Parker. He was also aware of, but did not apparently consult, a third MS. which he calls "*Annales Saxonici Petriburgenses*," collations from which by Joscelyn he had found in the Benet MS. just mentioned. Of Wheloc's Latin translation Earle says:—

"it exhibits mistakes such as might be expected in the first revival of the old English literature."¹

Mr. Plummer says of the same translation

"that it should contain many errors, some of them rather comic, was to be expected; but on the whole it is a courageous and creditable performance."

He gives references to a considerable number of instances where Wheloc's translation is faulty, and remarks that, as might be expected, he chiefly failed in the poetical parts.²

Wheloc, in fact, says of them, "*idioma hic et ad annum 942 et 975 perantiquum et horridum lectoris candorem et diligentiam desiderat.*" Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, which was published in 1691 and 1692, seems to have been the first work of importance in which Wheloc's edition of the *Chronicle* was utilised.

"He frequently quotes the *Annales Petriburgenses* (apparently at first hand) where Wheloc is deficient, and from one of these quotations (1,405) Bishop Nicholson remarks that this Peterborough Codex was

¹ *Parallel Chronicles*, Intr., lxix.

² *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, cxxviii, note 5.

never thoroughly compared with any copy hitherto published, and differs from them all."¹

Meanwhile the study of Anglo-Saxon had been greatly facilitated by the publication of Hickes' *Anglo-Saxon Grammar*, published at Oxford in 1689. Hickes also greatly assisted the next editor in his work. The next edition of the *Chronicle* was brought out at Oxford in the year 1692 with the title *Chronicon Saxonicum ex MSS. codicibus nunc primum integrum edidit ac Latinum fecit Edmundus Gibson A.B. e Collegio Reginae, Edmund Gibson*. He was a careful and painstaking scholar and afterwards became bishop of London. He refers to Wheloc's edition in very complimentary terms, but says the *codices* he followed were not complete. They did not in fact carry the story much beyond A.D. 1000, and he accordingly based his edition on what he considered a more complete manuscript, hence his use of the word *integrum* in his title. He says that since Wheloc's edition was published three other manuscripts had turned up, which he proceeds to describe and which he used for his edition, and he prides himself on the fact that the latter was really based on MS. authorities, *Cumque illa est hujus materiae ratio, ut de ulla re prius cogitare oporteat, quam textum omni ex parte integrum ab oculis habeamus; omnem meam curam converti ad Codices Manuscriptas comparandos*.² Of the three new codices used by Gibson two were in the Laud Collection in the Bodleian, and the other, which had been examined and collated by F. Junius, was in the Cottonian Collection. He also gives a careful collation of Wheloc's edition. Both Petrie and Hardy³ state that he actually based his text on Wheloc, which is a mistake. His own text was a reproduction of a MS. presented by Archbishop Laud in 1638 to the Bodleian, formerly numbered E. 89, and now Laud 636, and otherwise known as the Peterborough Book. The second Laudian MS. which he refers to and collated was not an original but a paper transcript made from the Cotton MS. Tib. A. vi. This transcript is also in the Bodleian. It was formerly labelled G. 36 and now Laud Misc. 661. Like the previous

¹ English, *op. cit.*, 185.

² *Op. cit.*, preface.

³ *Cat. B.H.*, i, 650.

MS. this paper copy was among the MSS. presented by Laud. Gibson refers to it as "MS. Cant."¹ Mr. Plummer has identified the handwriting of this paper MS. as that of Joscelyn.²

At the end of this copy of Joscelyn's is a pedigree of the Anglo-Saxon kings which is now contained in a detached leaf and which is numbered in the *Cotton Catalogue* as Tib. A. iii. The same leaf was copied by Junius and is contained in a volume of transcripts by him also in the Bodleian numbered Junius 66, which was also consulted by Gibson, so that the latter had before him two transcripts of this pedigree. Junius expressly says he took his own copy from Tiberius A. iii. This now detached leaf, there can be small doubt, was formerly part, as Wanley first pointed out, of what is generally referred to as MS. B., i.e. Tiberius A. vi.³

Lastly, Gibson also used collations and extracts by Junius preserved in the same volume, and taken from the MS. numbered Coll. Dom. A. viii. which Gibson generally quotes as "Cot," and which is now generally referred to as F. Gibson therefore found all the materials for his edition in the Bodleian, nor did he *collate* any original MS. His text was taken from the Laudian or so-called *Peterborough Chronicle*, and his collations were otherwise all taken from paper copies, so that up to this time only two of the MSS. of the *Chronicle* had been directly used in the printed copies. To his edition Gibson appends a Latin translation.

Gibson's edition, as Professor Earle says, "if not quite as perfect as his ambition designed, was a great advance upon Wheloc's and altogether an admirable work."⁴ In several instances, however, as Mr. Plummer points out, he has wrong readings;⁵ but these are not frequent, and he makes ample amends by his most engaging modesty. He never tries to gloss over words or phrases which he does not understand, *quid significet hoc vocabulum omnino nescio; quis sit sensus me omnino latet; harum vocum significationem ignoro; vocis significatis mihi plane incognita; quae sit hujus vocabuli significatio videant alii*; are some of his confessions; again he says in his preface, *quae-*

¹ Hardy's *Catalogue*, i, 656.

² See Plummer, *A. S. Chr.*, II, cxxx,

5.

³ See Thorpe, *op. cit.*, i, pref., xx and

xxx; Plummer, *op. cit.*, II, intr., xxix, note 1, cxxx, note 5.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, lxx.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, II, cxxx, note.

dam Chronici loca in quibus meam inscitiam libere profiteor. Mr. Plummer has also collected a number of his mistranslations, and he says particularly that his translation of the song of Brunaburh is almost as hopeless as that of Wheloc.¹ In 1696-9 Nicholson published his "Historical Library," in which, while speaking in complimentary terms of Gibson's edition of the *Chronicle*, he calls attention to the fact that he had failed to use several accessible MSS.

We have to pass on a long time before we again meet with any attempt to make the *Chronicle* more useful to students. The next century was the one, it will be remembered, in which Hume described the struggles and deeds of the Anglo-Saxons as of little more interest than the fights of kites and crows. In 1819 there was published at Norwich, "unencumbered with either text or notes," a volume in which part of the *Chronicle* was translated very fairly and with considerable literary skill and spirit by Miss Gurney. It was published anonymously with the title, "*A literal translation of the Saxon Chronicle, by a Lady.*" In the preface it is said that the authoress had only access to the printed texts, and that she had not completed it because she understood that the Rev. Mr. Ingram was engaged on the work. Ingram says that a similar translation by Gough existed in the Bodleian, but Mr. Plummer was not able to trace it.² These were, however, mere translations and did nothing for the text or its elucidation. Ingram's edition was published in 1823. Dr. J. Ingram, B.D., had been Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford and afterwards Master of Trinity College there. While duly praising Gibson's edition and expressing wonder that such a work should have been produced when the bishop was only twenty-three years old, he complains in his preface that the *Chronicle* had not up to this time been printed entire and from the collation of all the MSS. In his edition he in fact used all the materials then known, namely, the four original copies of the *Chronicle* in the *Cotton Library*, that in C.C.C. Cambridge and the so-called *Peterborough Chronicle* in the Bodleian, and he was the first to collate the two important MSS. Cott. Tib. B. i and Cott. Tib. B. iv. He also printed the single

¹ Plummer, *id.*, cxxix and xxx, note.

² *Id.*, II, Int. cexxxii note.

leaf previously referred to and known as Tib. A. iii. and collated the various paper transcripts remaining in London and Oxford together with Wheloc's text of the burnt Cotton MS. So that in regard to the presentation of the materials as then known his edition was complete. He appends a translation in English. In his preface he gives the following synopsis of the MSS.

MSS.	Trans.	Description.	Place of Custody.	Age.
I. II.	1	Ben., The Benet MS. C.T. A. III. Jun. 66, II.	C.C.C.C.'s XI. MSS. Parker B.M., Cot. Tib. A. III. .. Junian MSS., Bodleian ..	A.D. 891-1070. A.D. 977. Transcribed from the preceding by Junius.
III.	2	C.T. A. VI. Cant. of Gibson	B.M., Cot. Tib. A. VI. .. Bodleian, Laud G. 36 ..	A.D. 977. Transcript of the preceding and No. II.
IV.	3	C. Otho, B. XI. Cott. of Wheloc	<i>Olim</i> Cot. Lib. Lost. .. ? the same as the pre- ceding.	A.D. 1001. A.D. 1001.
	4	Dublin Transcript	Dublin Library. E. 5, 15..	Transcribed by Lambard from No. IV.
V.		C.T. B. I. <i>Abingdon</i> <i>Chronicle.</i>	B.M. Cot. Tib. B. I. ..	Ends imper- fectly in 1066.
VI.		C.T. B. IV. <i>Worcester</i> <i>Chronicle.</i>	B.M. Cot. Tib. B. IV. ..	Ends abruptly in 1080.
VII.		Petrob. <i>Peterborough</i> <i>Chronicle.</i>	<i>Olim</i> Abb. Petrob. Sup- posed to be lost.	Collated with the preceding by Joscelyn to 1080.
VIII.		Laud of Gibson	Bodl. Laud E. 80 ..	Ends imperfect- ly in 1154.
IX.	5	C. Domit. A. VIII. Cot. of Gibson	B.M. Cot. Dom. A. VIII. Junian Books. Bodleian ..	Ends imperfect- ly in 1058. A collation of the preceding by Junius to 1057.

This table seems correct except in making VII and VIII different whereas they were the same, and in treating Wheloc's text as perhaps taken from a transcript instead of, as was clearly the case, from the original MS. of Cot. Otho B. xi. The press marks of one or two of the MSS. have been altered since Ingram wrote. Ingram was the first to adequately appreciate the Latin Chronicle of Ethelward, whom he styles "the invaluable but neglected Etheluard." He also gives

references to Florence of Worcester, the so-called Asser, Simeon of Durham and other early Latin Chronicles. In fact, in regard to the *text* of the *Chronicle* not much has been done since Ingram's presentation of the MS. evidence, except minute corrections due to more careful collation. Where it errs is in the method of editing, which followed the pernicious habit then in vogue of giving us in the text not the continuous reading of some particular MS., but the conflate readings derived from the comparison of various texts, from which the editor selected what he deemed the most reputable version. Mr. Plummer has given some examples of these unfortunate conflate readings,¹ and of some of Ingram's faulty translations, in which he was sometimes misled by transliterating rather than translating, and taking a word which sounds like the original as if it were a real translation, while he often uses quite modern terms with a modern connotation to represent ancient ones with only a distant echo in the meaning. He further modernizes the names, thus converting Geraint into Grant,² Beocca into Becke, etc.³ These are, however, small blemishes. Ingram's was, in fact, the first scientific edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a great advance on anything that had been previously done, and a most creditable performance.

We next meet with a remarkable book whose real merits have been disguised by some occasional fantastic phrases and theories, but which is full of ingenious painstaking and learned suggestion. Its value has been altogether unjustly minimized by Professor Earle, while it has been virtually ignored by Mr. Plummer. It was published anonymously with the title, *Ancient History English and French exemplified in a regular dissection of the "Saxon Chronicle," etc.*, 1830. Its reputed author was Henry Searle English. In this work the author endeavours with a great deal of acumen, and as we shall see with considerable success, to trace the actual authorship of various portions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. *Inter alia* he was, I believe, the first to suggest what Mr. Plummer very properly makes a great

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, cxxxiii, note 4.

² *Id.*, 61.

³ *Id.*, 141.

point of, namely, that the various copies of the *Chronicle* should not be treated as mere forms of a substantive whole, but as separate documents with a separate origin and history, and one of the claims he makes in his book is contained in the sentence :

“I have separated and reduced to order the awkward mass of Chronicles published as the *Saxon Chronicle*.”¹

Mr. English gives an excellent account of the printed editions of the *Chronicle* up to the time he wrote.² I shall frequently have to refer to him in what follows. In 1847, Dr. Giles, who did so much to popularize and make available the sources of English history, published a translation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. It is professedly based on previous writers and did nothing for the critical history of the text or its contents. In 1848 there appeared the first and only volume of the *Monumenta Historica Britannica* in which Petrie professed to collect the materials for the history of England up to the Norman Conquest. In this work the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as far as the year 1066 is duly printed with an English translation by its side. The person mainly responsible for it was Mr. Richard Price, who died in 1833. This edition was notable for some matters. In the first place in it the text was primarily based on the Parker MS. at C.C.C. Cambridge which Mr. Price, its editor, appears to have thought the oldest and best in existence (and which he refers to as MS. A.), in both of which conclusions he was mistaken as we shall see further on; he nevertheless gave this very imperfect MS. a status and reputation which it maintained for many years during which it was appealed to as the ultimate guide to the text. Secondly, he refers to the MSS. by a new notation which has largely held its ground and which I will now condense.

MS. A is the C.C.C. MS. CLXXIII.
 MS. B „ the Cottonian MS. Tiberius A vi.
 MS. C „ „ „ Tiberius B. i.
 MS. D „ „ „ Tiberius B. iv.
 MS. E „ Bodleian MS. Laud 636 formerly E. 80.
 MS. F „ Cottonian MS. Domitian A. VIII, 2.
 MS. G „ „ „ Otho B. xi, 2.

¹ *Op. cit.*, 458.

² 180-196.

Thirdly, as it was Dr. Petrie's plan not to print anything beyond the year 1066 it is obvious that all the contents of those copies of the *Chronicle* dealing with events after that year are excluded. The text of this edition, as I have said, is taken from the C.C.C. Cambridge MS. as its basis. Slight additions from other sources are placed in brackets in the text. Where this could not be conveniently done from their length or otherwise, the variations form a second text underneath the first one and separated from it by a line. In the notes below a careful collation is given of all the variants in the MSS., including Wheloc's text of the burnt MS. Among these almost entirely verbal notes and separated from their place in the text are a number of Latin entries taken from the Peterborough MS.

The text was professedly treated as an eclectic one, however; thus in the preface we read: "In constructing the text Mr. Petrie endeavoured, where practicable, to render it as full as possible, by incorporating all the additional facts from the several copies, without alluding to their differences of style or dialect, as a philological work was not the object of the collection." Mr. Plummer says of the edition: "There is still too much conflation, and when A fails there seems to be no fixed principle as to what shall be placed above the line and what below. In some cases part of an annal from a MS. is placed above the line, and another part of the same annal from the same MS. is placed below 876, 1022-1038."¹

The translation (in English) was a great improvement on that of Ingram, but mistakes still occur, some of which have been pointed out by Mr. Plummer.² Many errors in this translation, however, had already been corrected by the Rev. J. Stevenson in his translation of the *Chronicle* in the series of the *Church Historians of England*, which, however, also contains some errors.³ In 1861, there appeared another edition of the *Chronicle* which Professor Earle has described as "one of the greatest boons that could have been conferred on the Anglo-Saxon scholar." It occurs in two volumes, one containing the text and the other the translation, and was

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, cxxxiv.

² *Id.*, note 4.

³ *Id.*, cxxxiv, 5, and cxxxv, 1.

published among the Chronicles and Memorials issued under the authority of the Master of the Rolls, and was edited by Mr. Benjamin Thorpe. Its text, which was carefully edited from the originals, is printed in six parallel columns, each of the six extant MSS. being given a column to itself. Variants from the extant fragments of the burnt Cotton MS. are given in the notes, but there is no collation of Wheloc's printed text which represents that MS. so well. The single leaf Tib. A, iii, is also given.¹ Some of the late insertions in the so-called Peterborough MS. are also transferred to the notes, but, as we shall see, this has not been done uniformly and is a pitfall rather than a help to the unwary. Similarly, Thorpe has treated most of the Latin text of MS. F, and of almost all the Latin entries in E, quite arbitrarily and has omitted them. As Mr. Plummer says, Dr. Pauli has called special attention to the value of the Latin text of F. Mr. Earle complains that he did not leave the annals of B undated where they are undated in the MS., but that he added dates of his own, and Mr. Plummer further (1) complains of Thorpe's critical conflation of the Mercian register with the main Chronicle; (2) the liberties taken with the arrangement of the text: thus, the distributing of the Annal of 910 E over several years, and the transposing of the notice of the comet from the beginning to the end of 905 D. In 1004 D he has inserted a sentence which has been omitted by *homoioteleuton*. In 343 E, he has an entry which does not occur in that MS. but in F. (3) Another misleading feature of the book is the unauthorized and not very successful attempts at emendation, *ex. gr.* scipan for sciran in 1097; angeow for the corrupt oncweow in 1110; (4) the dislocation of the parallelism in some of the later parts of the *Chronicle* 1044-1052, just when (owing to defective chronology, divergence in the beginning of the year, etc.) it was most necessary to bring out the parallelism correctly.² Plummer (in note 6) also gives a few instances of Thorpe's mis-translations, and adds that he is satisfied he made his translation not from his own text but from that in the M. H. B.³ Thorpe's

¹ See vol. i, 232 and 233.

² Plummer, II, cxxxv and notes.

³ *Id.*, cxxxvi, 7.

edition, however, was an admirable one, and is still indispensable to the student.

In 1865, Mr. Earle, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, published a very notable work entitled "*Two of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles parallel, etc.*" The text of the book had been in type for eight years when published, so that it was independent of Thorpe's and had not the advantage of his work or materials. The edition contains an admirable introduction, in which the history of the MSS. is carefully analysed. The interpolations of a glossator of the twelfth century in MS. A are printed in smaller type and can be more easily disconnected. Professor Earle's plan did not include a translation, but in the notes he brought a wide linguistic and historical knowledge to the elucidation of the *Chronicle*, and cleared up many passages hitherto obscure. What greatly affects the value of the edition, however, was the choice of one of the two parallel MSS. upon which the text is based. In regard to the *Peterborough Chronicle* there is nothing to be said, but as to the so-called MS. A, the C.C.C. Manuscript, of which Professor Earle says in its preface, "It has every title to rank first in the list of Saxon Chronicles," it is a great pity that it should have retained this status, which it first acquired in Prior's edition in the M. H. B., when the letter A was attached to it. We now know that instead of being the best it is the most worthless of the MSS.

Mr. Earle's edition was followed in 1892 and 1899 by that of Professor Plummer, which in regard to the text is a re-edition of Professor Earle's parallel edition of A and E, with a very careful re-collation of all the other MS. materials. It has been deservedly treated by scholars as the definite text. It is accompanied by a rich, learned, and admirable mass of notes, exegetical, critical, and historical, the result of a great deal of patient labour, and also of instinctive sound sense, which is better. It is a great pity, however, that when Mr. Plummer brought out his edition of the *Chronicle*, which professes on its title page to be only a new edition of Professor Earle's work (although it is really largely re-written, and a vast improvement upon it), he should have felt himself bound to follow him in the selection of MS. A as the

real basis of his text. This was excusable in 1865 when Mr. Earle's book was published, but a good deal had been written on the subject between 1865 and 1892.

On September 8th, and September 20th, 1879, I published two long letters in the *Athenaeum*, in which I examined in very considerable detail the question of the origin and value of Codex A of the *Chronicle*, and was, I believe, the first to show its worthless character. What I then said received but scanty notice from Mr. Plummer. Similar conclusions were reached later by Dr. Grubitz in an essay entitled "*Kritische Untersuchung über die Angelsächsischen Annalen bis zum Jahre 893*," in which he arrived at the conclusion that the so-called MS. A is not an original contemporary document, but a copy of a comparatively late date made by several scribes.¹ Mr. Plummer himself, notwithstanding that he makes the MS. the prime text in his book, calls it "a copy of a copy," and it is a pity that in preparing his almost ideal edition he should have felt himself bound to follow Mr. Earle in giving so much importance to such a worthless text. It is to be hoped that in a future edition MS. A will be displaced from its present proud position in Mr. Plummer's work and be used by him only for collation. Mr. Plummer has also, I think, in his edition altered Price's nomenclature of the MSS. unnecessarily and rather increased difficulties. Price called the burnt Cotton MS. G. It is true the text of G and of A are much alike, although not identical, and there has been controversy as to which was the mother of the other. This makes it ambiguous to change the letter G to a kind of Gothic A, as Mr. Plummer has done, and thus to have two MSS. both represented by the initial letter of the alphabet. It disguises several matters of importance, including the date of the original composition of the *Chronicle*, when the two MSS. in question are given titles so like each other and so apt to be confused. If we are to have a notation based on capital letters, I prefer Price's.

To Price's list of MSS. Mr. Plummer has added two others. One, which he labels H, was discovered by

¹ *Op. cit.*, 6-9.

Dr. Zupitza.¹ It consists of a single leaf in the Cott. MS., Dom. A, ix. The other, which he labels I, is in the Cott. MS. Caligula A, xv, fol. 132, and consists of a Paschal table with marginal annals in Saxon and Latin, and was published by Liebermann in his *Ungedruckte Ang.-Norm. Geschichtsquellen*, 1-8.

This completes the notice of the printed material available for the study of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the shape of editions of its MSS. and their illustration, and we will now turn to the MSS. themselves.

It is perfectly plain from many facts which will appear as we proceed that the MSS. of the *Chronicle* which we possess are the mere salvage from the large number of others which once existed. Most of the lost books have doubtless been destroyed by fire, that terrible enemy of the great monasteries, but others have also disappeared. Largely from the fact that as they were written in an unknown writing and language, no one took much interest in them, and they were probably used up as palimpsests or for the more homely purposes to which parchment can be turned. By a process of careful induction we can recover definite proofs of the former existence of other texts of the *Chronicle*, and in some cases can also recover their contents. So far as we know, seven complete MSS. of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* survived from the middle ages and escaped the destruction of books which followed the dissolution of the monasteries; six of these still exist intact, the seventh was destroyed in the disastrous fire which took place in the binding room of the British Museum in 1731, when so many treasures in the Cottonian Library were burnt. Only three leaves and a few charred fragments of it remain, partly intact, but its contents are most fortunately preserved in Wheloc's edition, which, as we have seen, was a very accurate copy of this MS., so that *the contents* of all the MSS. of the *Chronicle* known to have been intact at the Reformation are available for study. In addition we have the single leaf discovered by Dr. Zupitza which contains annals of the years 1113 and 1114, quite distinct in contents from the only other copy of the *Chronicle* reaching to so late a

¹ Published by him in *Anglia*, i, 195-197.

date, namely, MS. E, and which must have formed part of another copy. When this copy disappeared we do not know.

I propose to subject these MSS. and their contents in turn to a careful analysis, and thus to try and ascertain what they have to tell us about the origin and history of the document, and to begin with the MS. which comes down to the latest date, namely, that generally quoted as the *Peterborough Chronicle* (MS. E. in Price's notation). The text is preserved in one copy only, and there is no evidence that there was ever any other.

This MS. has on its first page the inscription "Liber Guil. Laud Archiep. Cant. et Cancellar. Universit. Oxon 1638," and it was presented by Laud with his other MSS. to the Bodleian Library, where it was formerly numbered E 80, and is now labelled Laud 636 E. The date on its first page just mentioned was probably that of its acquisition by Laud. Wanley, p. 65, suggests that certain underlinings in it in red were the work of the archbishop. There is a paper transcript of it also in the Bodleian which bears the same date of 1638. It is numbered Laud MSS. 661.

It had almost certainly previously belonged to Lisle, who died in 1637, and on whose death it doubtless passed to the archbishop. When in Lisle's possession he inserted a few notes on the margins and on interleaved large folio paper leaves. These chiefly consist of collations of the Corpus MS. which he calls "Benet M., vol. 269," down to 918, after which he calls it "MS. Cant." or "Canterbury Book."¹ Mr. Plummer says that on the blank paper leaves at the end Lisle has inserted from A the annals 894-924, 937, 941, 962, 973, 975, and a pedigree of Woden from 855 B. He remarks that Lisle found the poetry very difficult, and that he added a quaint notice to the annal of 937, viz., "This is mysticall and written in a poeticall vaine obscurity of purpose to avoide the danger of those tymes and needes decyphring." Of 941 he writes: "This also mysticall"; and of 975: "This also."

Lisle had probably obtained the MS. from Peterborough in 1634. While there, it had been used by Joscelyn for his glosses in MS. B. iv, and Plummer suggests that:

¹ See Hardy, *Cat.*, i, 658.

“Some notes in earlier hands occur here and there; one at 705 may be by Joscelyn; another at 893 refers to R. Talbot and may be by him.”¹ Five leaves, ff. 86–90, are of larger size, probably having escaped the shears of the binder, because on their margin was written a brief French chronicle from Brutus to Edward the First. In regard to its termination I will add a few words by Professor Earle. He says :

“The manuscript of this *Chronicle* [E.] has been described by Mr. Hardy as ending in a mutilated state; and Wanley seems to convey the same idea by saying *abrupte desinit codex*. Certainly the manuscript gives this impression at first sight; indeed it requires a minute and patient examination to discover the fact that there is no mutilation. The last page appears to have been long exposed to accidents without a cover, and it has been so rubbed that its contents are but partially and faintly legible but it will be seen by the text presented here, that it has been nearly all made out, and that the last clause was a pious commendation of the new Abbot, and that it terminates formally with a triangular punctuation.”²

The abbot in question was Abbot Waterville, who succeeded in the spring of 1155. It is quite plain, therefore, that the MS. is intact, and that no part of it was written later than 1155.

The regular termination of the concluding sentence and the presence of the three marks make it clear that the MS. is complete, and Mr. Plummer's doubts based on a missing leaf at the end of the volume are most easily met by the disappearance of a blank leaf.³

It clearly once belonged to Peterborough Abbey, and, as we shall see, contains ample evidence of its origin, and notably the insertion in it at various points of a series of local references to that abbey not contained in other MSS. of the *Chronicle*, and it was doubtless the MS. known to Joscelyn and Wheloc as the Peterborough Book or the *Annales Saxonice Petriburgenses*. Thorpe gives a

¹ Plummer, II, xxxiv.

² *Two of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles parallel*, intr., i.

³ There is a curious circumstance about the earlier references to this MS. which has been overlooked by its later editors, but which was noticed by Mr. English. Joscelyn, who put a good many marginalia in the MS. Tiberius B. iv, from the *Peterborough Chronicle*, inserted in the blank leaves of that

MS. the Annals from 1121–1131, but for some reason or other excluded those from 1132 to the end of MS. E, whence Mr. English inferred that Joscelyn's *Pet. Chr.* was not MS. E. I may add that in Wanley's Catalogue of the Saxon MSS. in Hicke's *Thesaurus* he describes MS. E. which he calls Laud 80, as terminating in the year 1144, a mistake which is almost incredible in so careful a writer.

facsimile of its first page, on Plate V. It tells the story from the Incarnation to the year 1154, and is obviously written in one hand, down to the close of the year 1121. After this there are breaks in the handwriting, at the end of 1122, of 1123, in the middle of 1126 and lastly at the end of 1131. It is clear therefore that no part of this MS. as it stands was written earlier than 1122, and that down to that date it in no wise answers to a series of annals written down year by year as the events happened, but that it was copied out continuously by a scribe from some other document or documents, and that he added some interpolations of his own.

Let us now turn shortly to this first section of the *Chronicle* ending with the annal 1121. In the first place, then, it differs entirely from every other copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in one very important particular, namely, in that instead of being composed in one uniform type of Anglo-Saxon speech, or in a type which gradually changes as time affected the language, it is written in two very sharply contrasted forms of the language, whose divergence from each other has been remarked upon by every editor of the document and which is in fact most patent and palpable. Secondly, what is singular and striking is that these two sharply contrasted forms of speech are not found separated into two entirely distinct sections of the narrative as if successively copied by a scribe from two documents with different sources, but are mixed up with each other; sections and paragraphs of the one being inserted as boulders, in the middle of the other, which forms a more or less continuous matrix in which they are enclosed.

Thirdly, it is plain and has been also emphasized by various writers, that the language and style of these inserted boulders and fragments agrees with that of the sections of the *Chronicle* which were written later than 1122, and whose language, therefore, whatever its origin, is a dialect of the twelfth century. A quotation from an excellent judge of such an issue, namely, Professor Earle, sums up what is virtually a universal opinion. He says:

“The insertions on the one hand, and the first continuator of the work on the other, echo the same sound, and eventually determine each other's date. Hence we know that the change of handwriting at 1121 is

no delusive token, that the penman brought his history close up to the time of writing, and that the insertions now before us belong definitely to the same literary effort which produced not merely this edition, but even this particular MS. of the *Chronicle*."

Earle then proceeds to point out the particular changes in the language upon which he bases his opinion.

Meyer, who is the last scholar who has critically examined the language in which the insertions are written, says definitely of them, *Sprachlich stehen sie indes im Ganzen auf derselben Stufe. Auch sind sie wohl ungefahr zu derselben Zeit abgefasst, nämlich 1117-1132.* We must now analyse each of them in turn.

The first occurs at the end of the annal of 654. It tells us how,

"In the time of Peada, King of Mercia, he and Oswiu, the brother of King Oswald, came together and agreed that they would rear a monastery to the glory of Christ and the honour of St. Peter, and they did so and gave it the name of Medeshamstede; because there is a well there which is called 'Medes wael,' and they then began the foundation, and wrought thereon and then committed it to a monk named Saxulf. He was greatly God's friend, and all the people loved him, and he was high-born and rich. He is now much richer with Christ. But the King Peada reigned no long while, for he was betrayed by his own queen at Eastertide."¹

The reference in the last clause to Peada was doubtless taken from Bede iii, 24, and was probably abstracted by the compiler. The rest of the annal came from the document referred to in the next entry. Mr. Earle speaks of this annal as the first of *two instalments* of a monograph on the abbey of Peterborough which is subsequently continued in parts, under the proper dates, and says of it, "With this digression we drop suddenly into a lower stage of the language. The same style recurs only with the continuations of the same subject, until towards the close of the first handwriting, A. D. 1121."² The reference to Saxulf being dead when it was written shows that it could not have been put down until at least the year 692, when that ecclesiastic, who had been made Bishop of Lichfield, died, and it is clear in fact that this

¹ *A.S.C.*, ed. Thorpe, ii, 24, 5.

² *Op. cit.*, 28, note.

annal and the next one to be cited form two instalments of one story about the Abbey of Peterborough which was subsequently continued in parts.

The second insertion is appended to the year 656. In this annal, after again reporting the death of Peada and the succession of his brother Wulfere as in the other Chronicles, the Peterborough MS. has a long paragraph rhetorically reciting what had been said in the previously quoted passage, and stating further how Wulfere for the love of his pledge-brother Oswiu and the abbot Saxulf, and by the counsel of his brothers Ethelred and Meriuald, and of his sisters Kyneburh and Kyneswith and the archbishop Deusdedit, and of all his witan who were in his kingdom, determined to dignify and honour the new foundation. He summoned Saxulf, and promised to find him ample gold and silver, lands and possessions, and bade his people work diligently at the building. After a few years the monastery was ready, and the king summoned a large gathering to its consecration which took place in the presence of himself, his brother Ethelred and his sisters Kyneburh and Kyneswith and Deusdedit the archbishop, and Ithamar, bishop of London, and Wini, bishop of London, and Jaruman, the bishop of the Mercians, and Bishop Tuda (of Lindisfarne) and Wilfrith the priest who was afterwards bishop, and all the thanes of his kingdom, and the monastery was consecrated in the name of St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Andrew, and the king stood at the high altar and recited the deed of gift of the possessions he made over to the abbey and he freed it from all taxes and from all jurisdiction, save that of Rome alone, and Saxulf begged the king in addition for the island called Ancarig (? Thorney island), where they might build another monastery to St. Mary and where some of his monks might live as anchorites. Then follow the names of the witnesses to the document which was professedly dated in the year 664, the seventh year of Wulfere and ninth of Deusdedit as archbishop.

After reciting this document the annal proceeds :

“When this thing was done the king sent to Rome to Pope Vitalianus to ask him to sanction by his writ what had been done.”

Then follows an epitome of the pope's writ, followed by the phrase: "Thus was the monastery at Medeshamstede begun, which has since been called Burh." After this we are told came another archbishop of Canterbury named Theodorus, who held a synod with his bishops and clergy, at which Winfrith, bishop of the Mercians, was deposed, and Saxulf, the abbot, was chosen bishop, and Cuthbald, a monk of the same monastery, was chosen abbot. This synod was held in the year 673.

There is therefore no disguise in regard to this particular entry having been an interpolation, for although entered under the year 656, it sets out a document which it dates 664 and mentions a synod which it dates 673. This is not all, it tells us that Medeshamstede had since been called Burh. On turning to a much later annal in the same MS., namely, that for 963, we are expressly told that it was only in the abbacy of Abbot Kenulf, 992-1005, that the change of name took place, when the place was in fact made into a *burh* by being surrounded with walls. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the two annals of 654 and 656 which are parts of the same narrative were not only not inserted until after the year 992, but they could not have been composed until after that year. There is another piece of evidence which points the same moral, and that is the use in this particular annal of the phrase *æfter his eorlas*. There were no eorlas in England at that date, the word *eorl* or *iarl* was of Danish origin and could not have been used by an English writer until after the Danish invasions. These facts make it plain that apart altogether from the form of the language in which the two annals are written, which is that of the twelfth century, their contents point unmistakeably to their being late insertions in an existing narrative.

We are further in a position not only to claim quite a late date for the composition and insertion of the annals of 654 and 656, but we can also trace them to their fountain sources. The account of the foundation of the monastery of Medeshamstede in those annals was taken from a long Latin charter professing to be a grant from Wulfere, king of the Mercians and Southern Angles, to the abbey of Medeshamstede of

certain lands and privileges, which is dated in 654 and is preserved in two old copies, one in the Cottonian MS., Augustus II., 5, and another one in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough. The charter is printed from the former copy by Kemble, C.D. number 9841, and by Birch, No. 22. From this same charter was also derived the long insertion in the annal of 656 beginning with the words, "In his time the Abbacy of Medeshamstede waxed very rich." Part of the annal is put in narrative form, and part of it is a recital of the operative parts of the Latin charter just referred to in a curtailed shape and running on all fours with it down to the end of the clause in which the dating of Wulfere's charter is related. There cannot be any doubt, as Mr. Plummer agrees, that the two insertions of 654 and 656 down to the dating clause I have mentioned are merely a short paraphrase and epitome of the altered Latin charter of Wulfere.

The witnesses are the same and qualified by the same phrases, the *patres* of the Latin is translated *eorls* in the Saxon, and the latter mentions thanes as assenting who are also included in the Latin. Wulfere in both the Latin and Saxon claims to carry out the work from love for his brother Peada and *his confrater* (translated wedbrodur) Oswiu. The parcels are described at very much greater length and with a largely increased number of names in the Latin original. A considerable series of names is left out in the Saxon, while other detached blocks of them are abstracted. Those which occur in both documents occur precisely in the same order and are written the same way. The same contraction of the text is further observable in the long and elaborate description of the privileges and exemptions which the king is supposed to grant, which include some of those which are hardest to believe, such as exemption from episcopal jurisdiction in the seventh century. The only variant, a curious one, is that while in the Latin charter, as printed by Kemble and Birch, the king professes to make his grant out of love *inter alios* for his brother (in the Saxon *germanus*) Peada and his *confrator et coregnator* Oswiu, in the Saxon copy in the *Chronicle* the grant is made out of love for his brothers

Ethelred and *Meriwald*, the latter of whom is not named, however, among the witnesses, while the name of Meriwald does not occur in the standard edition of the Charter as given by Birch, No. 22. It does, however, occur in what was perhaps a Latin copy of the Saxon text in the *Chronicle* printed by Birch, 22A.

Hugo Candidus, the historian of Peterborough, also follows with some closeness the Latin rather than the Saxon edition of the charter in question in his account of the foundation of the abbey and of the benefactions of King Wulfere (see Sparke, 3-8.)

Let us now turn to the Latin charter. It is universally accepted as a forgery. Thus Haddan and Stubbs speak of it as "the spurious act of Wulfhere," and its date is clearly inconsistent with the names of the attesting witnesses. Haddan and Stubbs say that Ithamar of Rochester died shortly after 655.¹ Plummer says he was certainly dead before 664. Damion, his successor, must have died before Deusdedit, *i.e.*, before 14th July, A.D. 664, while Tuda was not bishop till after the Whitby Conference in A.D. 664 and died in the course of the same year. Wini was bishop of Winchester in A.D. 664,² and did not become bishop of London until A.D. 666,³ yet he is qualified as bishop of London among the attesting witnesses to this charter.

Not only so, but it is quite plain that the language and terminology of this Latin charter are quite inconsistent with its having been composed much earlier than the twelfth century. I will content myself with quoting one conclusive clause.

"Praecipimus etiam quod praedictum monasterium et dominia sua sint libera et quieta ab omni dominacione et exactione, Comitum, Baronum, Vicecomitum et Ministrantium suorum."

Assuredly these titles are quite impossible in a genuine charter of the seventh century or in any charter before the Norman Conquest. This also puts out of court Mr. Plummer's suggestion that the charter was a forgery of the time of Edgar, and makes it clear that it was in fact a concoction of the twelfth century as Haddan and Stubbs concluded. Among the

¹ Bede, iii, 20, and Wharton. *A.S.I.* 30.

² Bede, iii, 28.

³ *Flor. Wig.*, see H. and S., *loc. cit.*

witnesses to the Latin charter and also in its Saxon translation is Eobba, who is said to have converted the Isle of Wight. This, as Mr. Plummer says, is a misunderstanding of Bede, H.E. iv, 13, which refers to Sussex. The Isle of Wight was not converted till much later. He adds, "the rash statement here is due to the forger of the Latin charter."

Let us now revert to the annal of 656. After reciting the facts of Wulfere's charter, the annal, as we have seen, refers to a ratification of the royal grant and its privileges by Pope Vitalian. If a Latin original of this part of the document once existed it is no longer extant, but we may be satisfied that whether it ever existed or not, the reference to Vitalian's acts in the *Chronicle* were the handiwork of the twelfth century, and that the story it testifies to is quite unreliable. Haddan and Stubbs call it "a spurious rescript of Vitalian" (*Councils*, etc., iii, 100) and the terms in which the document is drawn up completely justify the statement. That a Pope at any time, least of all in the seventh century, should issue a document phrased as follows is incredible :

"I, Pope Vitalian, grant to the King Wulfhere, and Archbishop Deusdedit, and Abbot Saxulf, all the things which ye desire. And I forbid that either king or anyman have any authority, save only the abbot, and that he obey any man save the Pope at Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury. If anyone break this in any thing, may St. Peter with his sword destroy him; if any one observe it, may St. Peter with the keys of heaven undo for him the kingdom of heaven."

In regard to one of the wide and impossible exemptions here referred to Mr. Plummer says :

"In reserving the rights of the archbishop of Canterbury the forger must have stood astounded at his own moderation."¹

It is curious that no reference to the confirmation of Wulfere's grant by Pope Vitalian is mentioned in Hugo Candidus, while it is ominous that William of Malmesbury prints an alleged letter of the same pope to Archbishop Theodore giving supremacy to Canterbury over all England, and dated in 668, which Haddan and Stubbs describe as "of questionable authority."²

The final clause of the annal of 656 refers to the appointment of Archbishop Theodore and the Synod of

¹ *Op. cit.*, ii, 27.

² *Op. cit.*, iii, 116.

Hereford (and was apparently taken from Bede, H.E., iv, 5). Hence it is plain that the bald fact that Saxulf was the founder of Medeshamstede Abbey, which is also mentioned by Bede, is all we can learn of the foundation of the abbey from these insertions.

We will now turn to the third insertion, which is dated in 675. It first describes how Aethelred, king of Mercia, sent Wilfred to Rome to Pope Agatho to tell him how his brothers Peada and Wulfhere had built the monastery at Medeshamstede and freed it against king and bishop, and asking him to give his sanction to what had been done. Agatho complied with the request, and the *Chronicle* gives what purport to be the terms of his writ. Here again "the Latin original" of the document, as Mr. Thorpe calls it, fortunately exists.¹ The document professes to cite the terms of Pope Agatho's decree, and it is one of the most curious ones known.

In the Saxon version the Pope begins by greeting King Aethelred, and Archbishop Theodore, and Bishop Saxulf and Abbot Cuthbald, and he ordains that neither king nor bishop, nor earl, nor any man have any claim or tribute, geld, or military or other service from the abbey, and that no shirebishop be so bold as to perform any ordination or consecration within the abbey unless requested by the abbot, nor claim there for proxies or synodals, or for any kind of thing, and further that the abbot should be deemed the pope's legate for the whole island, and that on a vacancy, whoever the monks should choose for their abbot should be consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury. The Pope further decreed that if any man had made a vow to go to Rome, which he should not be able to carry out because of sickness or the Lord's need of him, or poverty, that he might go to Medeshamstede and have the sacred forgiveness of Christ and St. Peter, and of the abbot and monks, as if he had gone to Rome, and he ordered Theodore to summon a synod where these privileges could be confirmed while he told Bishop Saxulf (who had desired the minster to be free) that he forbade him and all the bishops his successors to press any claim on the abbey save what the

¹ See Birch, number 48, ii, page 74, Peterborough. Haddan and Stubbs, iii, from the register of documents at 153.

abbot should be willing to grant, and he concluded with the hope that whosoever should break the decree should "be excommunicated and thrust down with Judas and with all the devils in hell."

We are next told that the writ of the Pope was sent to England by Wilfred, archbishop of York, in the year A.D. 680 (that is, five years later than the year under which the statement appears in the *Chronicle*). The king thereupon ordered Archbishop Theodore to summon a "Witan" at Heatfield (*i.e.* Hatfield), when he caused the writ to be read, and all assented to and confirmed it. The king then confirmed all the gifts made to the abbey by his brothers Peada and Wulfere, and his sisters Kyneburh and Kyneswith, and added fresh gifts of land of his own. The two archbishops and Bishop Saxulf in confirming the same excommunicated and cursed those who should break any part thereof.

This Saxon charter, like that previously quoted, proves its late date by the use of the word *eorl*, which was not introduced here until the Danish invasions, while its language further proves it to be a product of the twelfth century, and not only a product but a concoction of that date. Mr. Plummer says of it: "It is hardly necessary to call attention to the flagrant character of the forgery and the extravagant nature of the privileges claimed." Again he says: "The spurious Latin charter on which this insertion is based is in K.C.D., No. 990, Birch 48. It differs somewhat from the present A.S. version, but the differences are not on the side of greater modesty."¹ The real character of the document was long ago well analysed by Jeremy Collier in his *Ecclesiastical History*, i, 107. He thus enumerates his reasons for treating the grant as false:

"First, *its exorbitant extent*, for the Abbot of Medeshamstead is thereby discharged from the jurisdiction of his *diocesan* and even of a *synod*; and made the pope's legate all over England. Secondly, *because it is affirmed to have been brought over by Archbishop Wilfred, and produced and subscribed by him at the Council of Hatfield*; for Eddius does not mention that Wilfred brought over this Bull, nor that he was at Hatfield, and it is plain that *he could not be there*; he was at Rome in 680 at the synod against the Monothelites, and on his return was imprisoned for nine months in Northumberland, and the Council of Hatfield was

¹ *Op. cit.*, ii, 30.

held in *September*, 680. Thirdly, *the difference between the Latin and the Saxon copy. The Saxon* gives the abbot a *legatine power*, the *Latin* only admonishes the bishop of the diocese to *favour him* and treat him *like a brother*. Fourthly, *in the Saxon copy, Ethelred, King of Mercia, subscribes the Bull at the Council*. Bede mentions none but the clergy as present. Fifthly, *the pope discharges the abbey from all secular service*. The popes at that time pretended to no such power, and sixthly, *the legatine power*; a power which the abbots of Peterborough never exercised."

Professor Earle speaks of the exemptions contained in the pretended writs of Vitalian and Agatho as pure fiction, and a transplantation of the monkish ambition of the twelfth century back into the seventh century.¹ He further adds: "The first *real* case of exemption of an English abbey from episcopal jurisdiction appears to have been that of Battle Abbey."² "This document," say Haddan and Stubbs, "must share the condemnation of the charter of Wulfhere and of the privilege of Vitalian granted to the same monastery."³ It is interesting to note that a similar grant of privileges by Pope Agatho to the see of London is described by Haddan and Stubbs as *corrupt and spurious*, and also as a *corrupt fabrication*⁴ of a similar grant to Chertsey. The same writers say, "There can be little doubt as to the spuriousness of this and the preceding documents."⁵

The copy of this charter inserted by Hugo Candidus in his history is taken directly from the Latin rescension, following its phraseology and language and merely omitting some tautological phrases. In the Anglo-Saxon copy a witness is omitted who occurs in both copies of the Latin charter, namely, the person who signs his name as *Johannes Romanus Legatus*.

The next insertion is in the year 686, and tells us that "Ceadualla (the king of Wessex) gave Hoge, which is in an island called Heabur-eagh (apparently in Kent), to Medeshamstede. The then abbot of the monastery, we are told, was called Egbalt. He was the third abbot after Saxulf. At that time Theodorus was archbishop in Kent." This annal is not printed by Thorpe in smaller type like the other insertions, but in the text, and without any note about its being an

¹ *Op. cit.*, xlv.

² *Id.*, 287.

³ *Op. cit.*, iii, 160.

⁴ *Id.*, iii, 161.

⁵ *Id.*, 164.

interpolation¹; but as Professor Earle says, the intrusion is betrayed not only by the language but by the subject. In regard to Abbot Egbalt, Mr. Plummer has a note in which he says he did not become abbot until the year 709. For this he cites Professor Bright's History, p. 393, who in turn cites the last edition of the *Monasticon*. This last authority, however, has no better foundation for the statement than an *obiter dictum* of Hugo Candidus, who at this time is not an independent witness, and who merely says that St. Wilfred died during the abbacy of Abbot Cuthbald.² As, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Wilfred died in 709, the conclusion has been reached that Egbalt, Cuthbald's successor, did not become abbot till 709. All this, however, rests on the very unsafe foundation of Hugo, and is in itself most improbable and impossible to correlate with the other evidence we possess. To return to the annal of 686. Neither Professor Earle nor Mr. Plummer have noticed that this annal, like the others previously discussed, is entirely condensed from another Latin document which is also extant,³ and which is preserved in the register of Peterborough documents in the Society of Antiquaries. This document has all the internal signs of a forgery. It begins with some unusual rhetorical phrases, and then Cadualla proceeds to say that when he obtained the nation of the Cantuarii (*cum dispensanti domino Cantuariorum regimina nostro obtemperarent imperio*), i.e., in 686, he made over 40 lands (*xl terrae*) situated at Hogh belonging to the island of Hebereahg, to the Abbot Egbalt and his community, as was attested by the succeeding witnesses. The same document then states that some years having elapsed, the kingdom of Kent fell into the hands of Sighere, king of the Saxons, who confirmed the grant. Presently Suebheard, another king of Kent, not only confirmed but increased it by twenty lands and also added six cassates of wood-land in another place called Fircanhamstede. The grant was also confirmed by King Wigtred. After a lapse of some time, "Æthelred, King of the Mercians, and of all the isles in Britain," read the charter at the Monastery

¹ *A.S.C.*, i, 63.

² Sparke, 13.

³ Kemble, *C.D.*, n. 40; Birch, 89.

of Medeshamstede, and being asked by Abbot Egbalt to confirm it, did so with the assent of Bishop Saxulf. Then follow a long series of witnesses, divided into groups, each of the kings above named being followed by a set of signatures. The document is not dated, and although in the outward guise and form of a single charter, is in reality a composite structure, in which the separate acts of several kings are condensed in one document, in a quite impossible form of conveyancing. The contents, too, are very inconsistent. Ceadwalla was still a pagan in the year 688, after which he resigned the throne and made a journey to Rome, where he was baptized in 689 and died the same year. He was apparently never in England at all after he became a Christian. It makes it hard to understand how he could, therefore, have been a benefactor to the Church, and how he acted in connection with Archbishop Theodore, who died in 690, in making a grant to Peterborough. Peterborough, again, was not within his dominions of Wessex and Kent, but in the kingdom of another sovereign at deadly issue with his own race, namely, that of Mercia. In 686 and 687, he was laying waste Kent, yet the neighbouring kings are found concurring in this grant and enlarging it. Among the signatories, Sebbi, the joint king of Essex, is made to sign as *Sebbi episcopus*, while the confirmation of King Æthelred is signed inter alios by *Heddan abbas Medeshamstede indignus testis*. There can be no doubt, in fact, that the document was a forgery, like the rest of those I have discussed. The various kings, and perhaps other names mentioned in it, were no doubt derived from Bede. It is ominous that this grant is not mentioned by Hugo Candidus. In regard to Abbot Egbalt he says that he was the third abbot after Saxulf, while in the notice in the *Chronicle* he is made his immediate successor.

The next insertion, which is entered under the year 777, almost a century later, consists of the abstracts of two documents having nothing in common. The first one tells us, that in the days of King Offa there was an abbot of Medeshamstede called Beonna, who, with the consent of the monks, let ten bondlands at Swineshead with pasture, meadow and appurtenances, to an ealdorman

called Cuthbriht for his life, for a yearly rent of £50 with a day's entertainment, or in lieu of it, 30s. per annum. The witnesses, we are told, were King Offa and King Egferth, and Archbishop Hygeberht and Bishop Ceolwulf, and Bishop Inwona and Abbot Beonna, and *many other bishops and abbots, and many other good men*. The last clause in italics shows that the document is professedly an abstract. Here again the original is extant and preserved in the register of Peterborough documents preserved at the Society of Antiquaries, and has been abstracted by Birch, number 271, and the Saxon edition was no doubt, as its language shows, a translation made from it in the twelfth century. The Latin original adds several names to the list of witnesses after Beonna. The fact that the document is undated, and the form and the witnesses of this Latin original seem to me to be most suspicious. It is almost incredible that a simple lease of lands for one life made by the community at Peterborough to a private individual should have been attested by two kings, an archbishop, and a bishop. Egferth who styles himself king, and signs this charter after Offa, was crowned in his father's lifetime in 785, and eventually succeeded him in 795, but he only reigned 143 days. In most charters, however, he continued to style himself *clito, filius regis*, etc., and not *rex*, until his father's death. Archbishop Hygeberht, who signs next, was no doubt the personage of that name who was appointed archbishop of Lichfield in 787.¹ Ceolwulf, who signs next, was bishop of Lindsay from 767-796. Inwona was bishop of Leicester from *circ.* 781-4 to *circ.* 801-3. It is plain, therefore, that although entered in the *Chronicle* under the year 777, the earliest possible date for the original of this document was 787. Beonna Abbas signs a grant by Offa to Bishop Waermund in 789.² The date is not the really important matter, however. It is the fact of these exalted witnesses attaching their names to such a homely document, which makes it very probable that it is not genuine, and that a much later writer was giving what he doubtless thought a very safe warranty to a spurious document, by thus attesting it.

¹ See Haddan and Stubbs, iii, 445.

² See Birch, 255.

Following immediately in the *Chronicle*, on the abstract of Beonna's charter, under the year 777 we have in the same twelfth century English an abstract of a second charter, of which the Latin original is also extant. Apart from its language the use of the word *eorl* in the Saxon copy shows that it was translated long after the year 777, when it is entered in the *Chronicle*. The word *eorl* would be an absurd anachronism in an eighth century document. I take it the use of *tun* in the modern sense of town in the same document is a similar anachronism. As in the case of the previously quoted Latin charter the original of this one has no date. It purports to be made at the request of "Pusa, my abbot," and of his "praefectus" called Brorda, who asked him to concede certain liberties, *aliquam libertatem* to the church called Wocengas (*i.e.*, Woking). The king proposes to grant the privileges requested which are limited to secular exemptions in the terms, "*Haec est ergo praefata munificentia in loco in quo se illud monasterium situm est, ut absque impedimento secularum negotiorum ac regalium tributorum sine expeditionum aut jussiorum incognitarum . soli domino serviens sancta congregatio juris sui ac dominationis potestate propria non pri- vetur .*" The document is signed "*in regione Suth-regiona . villa regali Freoderichuma.*"¹

In this the original document, the most suspicious circumstance is that it is not dated. After passing through the crucible of the *Peterborough Chronicle* it has been changed, however, in some notable respects. In that edition of it, Brorda is made the owner of the minster at Woking, and is made to prefer his request to the king because he further wished to give Woking to Medeshamstede (which last is not named at all in the Latin charter). The privileges are also extended as in a previous instance already quoted, and we are told the king freed the minster at Woking, against king, and against bishop, and against *eorl*, and against all men, so that no one should have any claim there except St. Peter and the abbot; these changes show what sinister methods of dealing with his documents could be practised by the Peterborough compiler when it suited his purpose.

¹ Birch, 275.

The granting of these exemptions and far-reaching privileges was quite impossible in the eighth century, and as we have seen reflect the thoughts of a much later date. Again, Brorda was a Mercian alderman. He was present at the legantine synod of 787 and signed many charters. According to Simeon of Durham he was also called Hildegils, and died in 799 (ii, 62). It seems curious that, if a Mercian, he should have had proprietary rights over an abbey at Woking in the West-Saxon kingdom, and Haddan and Stubbs speak of the entry in the *Chronicle* as not entirely satisfactory.

Neither Professor Earle nor Mr. Plummer seem to have been aware of the Latin originals of the annal of 777. It is interesting to remember that in the Peterborough register at the Society of Antiquaries we have a copy of another Woking document which has a dubious look. It consists of a grant of privileges to the monasteries of St. Peter at Vermundsey and Woking in which Peterborough is again not mentioned. The latter only obtained possession of Woking at a later date, but it would naturally profit from any privileges that could be claimed by its later *protégé*. Of this grant of remuneration and privilege Haddan and Stubbs say: "The document, of course, is of very questionable authority;" they add that "it should be compared with the spurious privileges of Chertsey and Evesham."¹ It will be seen, therefore, that grave suspicion attaches to the rubrics of 777.

The next insertion is in the year 852, where we read that at this time Ceolred, abbot of Medeshamstede, and the monks let some land at Sempigaham, or Sempringham in Lincolnshire, to Wilfred for his life on condition that he surrendered Sliorvaforda (*i.e.*, Sleaford) to the abbey, and

"delivered annually to the abbey 60 fothers of wood, and 12 fothers of coal, and six fothers of faggots, and two tuns of pure ale, and two beasts fit for slaughter, and 600 loaves, and 10 measures of Welsh ale, and a horse, and thirty shillings, and one day's entertainment. At this agreement were present Buhred and Archbishop Ceolred, and Bishop Tunberht, and Bishop Cenred, and Bishop Alhhun, and Abbot Wiltred, and Abbot Werththerd, and Aethelheard the ealdorman, and Hunberht the ealdorman and many others."

¹ *Op. cit.*, iii, 277.

The conclusion of the clause shows that the quotation is an epitome, and the original document from which the annal is taken is also extant and preserved in the Peterborough register at the Society of Antiquaries.¹ It is written bilingually in Saxon and Latin; at least the first clause is in Latin. *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*, so is the dating clause, *anno vero dominice incarnationis dccccii. indictione xv: hoc factum est*. It seems to be a genuine document. The Saxon copy contains several mistakes, as in making the lease for one life instead of two; in calling the archbishop Ceolred instead of Ceolnoth, and the bishop Cenred or Ceored instead of Ceolred, who was bishop of Leicester. This copy was no doubt made in the twelfth century.

The next insertion (which is not marked as such by Thorpe) is a dismal one, for it describes in one dreary sentence the utter destruction of the abbey. It tells us merely that

“The Danes in that year went to Medeshamstede and burnt and broke, and slew the abbot and the monks, and all they found there, then made they that which was once full rich so that it was reduced to nothing.”

The language of this insertion like that of the rest is of the twelfth century and it contains no details such as a contemporary would have written. Except the statement about the destruction of the abbey, the rest is all rhetoric. That no details were anywhere extant may be gathered from the long narration of the event by Hugo Candidus in his history, which is only a prolonged wail, from which we merely gather that he attributed the destruction of the abbey to the same horde of Danes who under Inguar and Hubba made a martyr of King Edmund. The destruction was complete and the place remained a waste for ninety-six years. It is perfectly plain from the narrative of Hugo Candidus that beyond the Latin charters, which were doubtless put together in his own lifetime, and which were mere spurious documents, he had no materials for the early history of the abbey. After Egbalt he mentions four abbots only—Puse, Benna, Selredus and Hedda—and then says :

¹ See K., C.D., 277; Birch, 464.

“Cætera autem ut miraculosum insignia vel quaeque tunc tempora sunt gesta, aut scriptorum negligentia, aut perscrutiorus tempore abolita, nostra latent saecula ; praeter ea, quae in privilegiis sunt scripta, in quibus, et eorum nomina sunt reperta.”¹

I may add that this is the only mention made by Hugo Candidus of these four abbots.

The next insertion was made in the year 963, and it is a very important text. It is written, like the rest of those I have discussed, in the language of the twelfth century, and Thorpe points out a notable fact in that the word *tun* in it is used in the modern sense of town,² which, as we saw, was the case in an earlier insertion, and is an anachronism.

The previously quoted annal described the destruction of the abbey by the Danes. This one describes its restoration in the reign of Edgar, almost a century later. It tells us that :

“the year after Athelwold was consecrated as Bishop of Winchester, *i.e.*, 964, he built many monasteries and drove the clerks out of the bishopric as they would not have any rule, and set monks there. He made two abbeys, one for monks and one for nuns at Winchester. He then went to King Eadgar and begged him to give him all the monasteries the heathen men had destroyed, as he wished to restore them. This the king gladly did. He therefore restored the monastery at Ely, where St. Aetheldretha lay and made one of his monks named Brihtnodeth its abbot, and put monks there where there had been nuns, and he bought many villages of the king and made the foundation very rich. He then went to Medeshamstede which had been destroyed by the heathen men *and there he found nothing but old walls and wild woods, and he found hidden in the old walls writings that Abbot Headda had once written, how King Wulfhere and his brother Aethelred had built it, and how they freed it against the king, and against bishop, and against all secular service ; and how Pope Agatho had confirmed it by writ, and the Archbishop Deusdedit.*”

This is assuredly a very interesting notice. It will be remembered that the abbey had been lying in ruins for ninety-six years, and the statement is that among its ruined walls the inestimable parchments in question had been found intact. “This statement,” as Professor Earle says, “is enough to set criticism on the alert as to the soundness of the antecedent history.”³ This is surely putting the matter very gently. It was not an uncommon artifice to produce useful and almost necessary

¹ Sparke, 13.

² *Op. cit.*, ii, 94, note.

³ *Op. cit.*, 120, note.

documents out of the holes in old walls. Thus in Matthew Paris' history of Abbot Eadmer there is a tale of a very ancient book, written in the British language, which was discovered in a recess in a wall, and of its being with some difficulty deciphered by Unwana, an aged monk, when it was found to contain the life of St. Alban.¹ It was unfortunate in that case that the most interesting original disappeared directly it had been copied and been published in Latin. In the present case the documents which were professedly discovered in the hole in the wall included some of those which, as we have seen, are now universally condemned on other grounds as forgeries, notably the original Latin copies of Wulfhere's grant of 664, and of Pope Agatho's writ of 675.

Let us now revert to the annal of 963. It reports that Bishop Athelwold caused the monastery at Medeshamstede to be rebuilt and that he put an Abbot there who was called Athulf (Ealdwulf was his real name), and with him monks. He then showed the king the writings which he claimed had been found and the king thereupon made a fresh grant of lands with a confirmation of privileges to the monastery which are duly set out. Then (we are told) the Abbot Athulf bought fresh lands and largely endowed the monastery, and he remained there till the death of Archbishop Oswald of York, whom he succeeded. Kenulf was then appointed abbot. He was the first to surround the abbey with a wall, whence it became known as Burh instead of Medeshamstede. There he remained till he was elected Bishop of Winchester, when he was succeeded as abbot by Ælfsi, who was abbot for fifty years. He translated the remains of St. Kyneburgh and St. Kyneswith, who lay at Castor, and of Saint Tibba, who lay at Ryhall, to Peterborough and offered them to St. Peter in one day.

This is very instructive. Oswald, archbishop of York, died in 992, Kenulf became bishop of Winchester in 1005, and fifty years from that date, when Aelfsi is said to have died, was 1055, so that this annal, which is entered under 963 in the *Chronicle*, could not have been composed until 1055 or later. It is in fact not an annal at all, but an abstract of the history of Peterborough for 62 years

¹ Hardy, *Cat. of MSS.*, i, 5-16.

condensed into a long paragraph and duly entered under its earliest year.

Like the other similar annals we have considered, it is written in the English of the twelfth century. What is more important to remember, however, is that it is also a translation from the Latin, and the Latin originals whence it was derived are extant. The first of these (see Birch, 1280), preserved in the Peterborough register at the Society of Antiquaries, professes to be a grant of lands and privileges from Eadgar. It recites the forged charter of Wulfhere and the writ of exemption of Pope Agatho, above described, and there shown to be a twelfth century concoction. Although dated in 970 it refers to Medeshamstede as Burh or Burch, which name, as we read in the annal of 963, it only acquired in Kenulf's abbacy, c. 992-1005. Its phraseology is quite fantastic. The king speaks of himself as : *Ego Edgarus sub ipso sydereo præsidents regno magnæ Britanniae*, and speaks of the year 972 as *terreni imperii mei anno decimo*. Dunstan, the archbishop of Canterbury, and Oswald of York, who are the only signatories to the document, are both made privy to the most extravagant claims of exemption from all ecclesiastical control, which includes the phrase "*et reverendissimi archiepiscopi nostri Dunstani auctoritati*," and only excepts that of the abbot and the Pope. Dunstan signs *cum trophæo aggae crucis corroboravi*. Assuredly we could not have a better collection of proofs that this document, like others previously named, was a forgery of the twelfth century.

This is no doubt the original draft of the spurious charter, while a much more corrupt and mutilated copy is printed by Birch under the number 1258 which is taken from Ingulf. The former is also undoubtedly the source of the earlier part of the annal of 963, the charter as quoted, in which is a mutilated epitome of this Latin document with a much curtailed list of witnesses.

It seems to me a pity that Mr. Plummer has associated these spurious documents with the charters numbered 1128-1130 in Birch relating to Peterborough which have nothing to do with the notices in the *Chronicle*, are not referred to in it, and have all the character and looks of genuine documents.

Down to this point the insertions, with the exception of that of 852 and the notice of the destruction of the monastery in 870, are based upon other documents, all of which, as far as we can judge, were spurious. None of these entries, with the exceptions named, are of any value, and all are worthless as historical data. The terrible desolation caused by the Danes evidently destroyed all documents and evidences belonging to the abbey which were then existing, and if the grant of 852 be deemed an exception it will be remembered that it was such a bilateral transaction as would necessitate two copies of the deed, and that the one which survives was probably derived by the monks from the grantee after the fire.

The succeeding insertions stand on a different footing altogether and are based on what seem to be reliable data, either the living tradition of the monks or various notanda preserved in note books, etc., and probably in Latin. It is clear, however, from their language that they were composed as we have them by the same writer who translated the spurious Latin charters.

Let us now turn to the next interpolated passage. It is appended to the annal of 1013 and refers to the purchase by Abbot Aelfsi of the body, all except the head, of St. Florentine for £500 from the monks of Bonneval. The abbot went there to effect a purchase, and tells us he found a poor abbot and poor monks, for they had been plundered. In the annal, St. Florentine is called "Sancte," and not "halga," which seems to point to the notice having come from a Latin source.

In regard to this interesting entry, a passage in the history of Hugo Candidus perhaps explains the source of the information. It tells us the monks of Bonneval were in the habit of going on periodical pilgrimages to Peterborough. Hugo says, *unde monachi prædicti monasterii S. Florentini . . . gemunt per secula, sicut nobis retulerunt quidam ex ipsis qui eum requirere et orare venerant in Anglia.*¹

The periodical visit of these Frenchmen to do homage to their saint would keep the story about him alive.

The next insertion, the tenth, is dated in 1041 (really 1042). It merely tells us of the death of Aelfsi, the Abbot

¹ Sparke, 32.

of Burh, and of the appointment of his successor Arnwi, a monk.

The next insertion is in 1052. It tells us how Abbot Arnwi, with the consent of the king, surrendered his post to Leofric and afterwards lived eight years, and goes on to say Leofric so enriched the monastery that it was called the golden borough, and waxed greatly in land, gold and silver.

The penultimate sentence of this annal ends with the word Canterbury, to which Plummer adds a particularly interesting note in view of the history of the *Peterborough Chronicle*. He says "the annal originally ended at this point. The remainder is for the most part inserted in the margin but by the same hand." Here, therefore, we see the process of interpolation actually in progress.

The next interpolation, the twelfth, is in 1066. It mentions the death of Abbot Leofric on All Hallows mass night, November 1, followed by the ejaculation, "God be merciful to his soul." Hugo Candidus calls him *pulcherrimus monachorum, flos et decus abbatum Lewricus*.

Leofric was a nephew of the great Earl Leofric, and the annalist tells us that the monastery greatly prospered in his time and became very rich, and he was dear to the people, and the king gave to the abbey of St. Peter the abbey of Burton, and that of Coventry which his uncle had founded, and also Croyland and Thorney. Then, says the annalist, the golden borough became the wretched borough. The monks chose Brand for their abbot and sent him to Edgar Ætheling, whom the people wished to be king. This greatly enraged William, who became reconciled with Brand, the latter gave the king 40 marks in gold for a reconciliation, after which he lived for two years, thereupon there came every tribulation and cost on the abbey.

The death of Abbot Brand is entered in the *Peterborough Chronicle* in 1069. He died on November 27th, which shows the previous annal was not a contemporary entry. This *obit* of Brand ought to be treated as an insertion.

¹ *Op. cit.*, i, 183, note.

In 1070 we have a long and important insertion. As Mr. Plummer argues, it is clear that the original copy of the *Chronicle* upon which the Peterborough text is based was here in the form we find it in MS. D.; the first sentence is in part precisely the same in both. The compiler of E, however, inserted a large quantity of Peterborough matter, and wrote it out in his own twelfth century English. I will give an abstract of this local matter. It begins with a statement that in this year Swein, king of Denmark, entered the Humber and was joined by the country people. Then there came to Ely, Christian, the Danish bishop (of Aarhus) and the earl Asbiörn and the Danish huscarls or body guards, and they were joined by all the people of the Fenland who thought they would win the land. The monks of Peterborough heard that these people (the *Chronicle* calls them outlaws), Hereward and his men, were going to plunder the monastery because the king had given it to a Frenchman (*i.e.*, Turolde). A certain church ward called Ivar, with the approval of the monks, removed some of the abbey treasures, gospels, mass vestments, mantles, charters, copes, robes, etc., and informed Turolde that the outlaws intended to come to the abbey. They came on the morrow with many ships and were resisted by the monks, but they set fire to the place and burnt all the monks' houses and all the town except one house, and presently entered the abbey by the Bolehithe gate. Hugo Candidus also calls it *janua ab australi parte monasterii Petroburgensis vulgo hodie Bulldykegate dicta*. They climbed up to the rood, took the crown of beaten gold from the Saviour's head, and the bracket under his foot which was all of red gold. They mounted the tower and took the crozier of gold and silver there hidden, and two gold shrines, and of silver, and fifteen great roods of gold and silver and some documents and books. They professed to do all this out of love for the monastery. They then went off in ships to Ely and there deposited their treasures. The monks were all dispersed save one named Leofwine Lange, who was sick in the sick room (*saecraeman*). Hugo Candidus uses the Latin equivalent *in domo infirmorum*. Then came Turolde with one hundred and sixty Frenchmen (*Frencisce*) all armed, and they found everything

burnt but the church, but the outlaws had gone away in their ships knowing he would come. This was on June 2nd. Then the two kings William and Swein were reconciled. The Danes took the treasures away with them from Ely, but their fleet was scattered in a storm, some went to Norway, some to Ireland, and some to Denmark. The crozier, and some shrines and roods, and many other treasures reached Denmark, and were put in a church there. One night, however, through their carelessness and drunkenness, the church got on fire and was burnt with all in it. The compiler ends this description with one of his ejaculations on the abbey, "May God Almighty have compassion on it through His mercy." Turol and his monks now returned, and within a week were again saying mass there. Bishop Aegelric excommunicated all the men who had done the evil. The rest of the annal agrees entirely in regard to its matter with MS. D, but is phrased somewhat differently. In the year 1098 is entered the *obit* of Abbot Turol.

The next insertion is in 1102 where we read, "In this same year in Pentecost mass week, there came thieves, some from Aluearnie,¹ some from France, and some from Flanders, and broke into the monastery of Peterborough, and took a number of roods, chalices and candlesticks in gold and silver. Hugo Candidus gives other details of this raid, the circumstances of which may easily have been in the memory of one who was living in the abbey in 1121, when the *Chronicle* was first composed.

In the next year is another insertion which has apparently been overlooked by the commentators. It tells us that in this year, Matthias, abbot of Peterborough, died. He had only held the abbacy a year. "He was received with procession on October 21st, and on the same day of the second year he was dead at Gloucester, and was there buried."

The next insertion is in 1107, when we are told that among those who received abbacies was Ernulf, who had been prior of Canterbury and now succeeded to Burch, seven years after King Henry succeeded to the kingdom and the fortieth since "the Franks" ruled the land.

¹ Thorpe, Earle and Plummer translate Auvergne, but Hugo Candidus says Alemannia. Auvergne seems an impossible distance away.

The next insertion is in 1114. It tells us how at this time the king, intending to go abroad, got as far as the coast, but was prevented by the weather from crossing; meanwhile he summoned Abbot Ernulf to go to him as he wished to speak to him, and he forced the bishopric of Rochester upon him, and the archbishops, and bishops, and nobility in England supported the king. Ernulf resisted long, but at length was constrained to accept it. This interview took place at Bourne (*i.e.*, Eastbourne) on September 15th. The king bade the archbishop take him to Canterbury to consecrate him. The monks of Peterborough, when they heard of it, were sorry as they had never been before. "May God Almighty ever abide with him," ejaculates the writer. The king presently gave the monastery to a monk of Seez, named Johannes, at the desire of the archbishop of Canterbury, and he soon after went to Rome with a monk called Warner, and the archbishop's nephew called John, to bring home the pall for the archbishop. This was on September 21st, and the same day the king set sail from Portsmouth.

In regard to this annal Thorpe says in a note :

"From here (*i.e.* from the sentence relating to Peterborough) to the end of the year the language becomes extremely ungrammatical and corrupt, quite unlike the foregoing, but resembling that of the spurious and doubtful charters at pp. 52, 58, 92, 122 and 220."

The matter is moreover connected with the abbey of Peterborough,¹ Mr. Plummer remarks that certain words in this annal, such as *aefter*, *pallium*, *munec*, *waes* are added as corrections above the line, or on the margin by a later hand, probably that which wrote the annal 1122.² The next insertion is in the year 1115, where it is written in the margin by a later hand and is a mere short reference to the abbot of Peterborough in the words, "*se l'abb., Johan of Burh.*" The 18th and last of the insertions was made in the year 1116, and consists of a sentence appended to the annal of that year. It tells us how the monastery of Peterborough was burnt and all the houses, except the chapter house and the sleeping room (*slaeppeperne*), together with the greater part of the town, which happened on Friday the second of the

¹ Thorpe, *op. cit.*, 370, note.

² *Op. cit.*, i, 246, note.

nonnes of August (August 4th). Thorpe says in regard to the language of this phrase :

“From here (*i.e.* its beginning) to the end of the year is another corrupt and ungrammatical passage, relating to Peterborough, and may probably, like the others, be the composition of a foreigner.”¹

Although this is the last actual insertion we seem to have a ghost of another, for in the annal of 1117 the concluding phrase is incomplete and more than a line and a half are left vacant in the MS. as if the materials for the clause had not been supplied to the scribe by the historian. Mr. Plummer suggests that the writer was going on to mention the re-foundation of the abbey.²

Let us now sum up the result of this analysis. It is clear in the first place that, as Meyer says, all these insertions are written in one form of speech and were doubtless the product of one author. They may be divided into several classes. To the first class belong the annals of 654, 656, 675, 686, 777, 852, 963, which are all of them, so far as we can judge, translations or abstracts of Latin originals, most of which survive, some of them at Peterborough and others in the valuable register of Peterborough documents presented to the Society of Antiquaries by the Earl of Exeter. These Latin originals, with the possible exception of the annal 852, were doubtless forgeries, and have been so treated by every competent inquirer.

Apart from the conclusive internal evidence here brought together on the subject is the overwhelming fact that in the year 870 the monastery was utterly destroyed and the community extirpated, and that it remained in ruins for nearly a century, and we can hardly doubt that all its treasures were carried off and its books and documents burnt. The particular document quoted in the *Chronicle* under the year 852, and which has no palpable defects of form and language, is a deed in which a private individual had special transactions with the abbey, involving bilateral obligations, and it is not impossible that such private individual could retain a duplicate of the deed which was eventually copied into the register of the monastery.

¹ *Op. cit.*, i, 37.

² *Op. cit.*, ii, 296

In regard to the forged Latin deeds underlying the annals of 654, 656, 675, 686 and 963, Mr. Plummer has suggested that they were made in the reign of Edgar. This view was doubtless based by him on the statement in the annal of 963 which suggests their being in existence at that time, but that insertion is itself a composition or compilation of the twelfth century and of no value as a guide in such a matter. On the other hand, the Latin phraseology of these deeds seems, as I have tried to show, to clearly point to their having been forged in the twelfth century. Later on we shall discuss who was the probable forger. Such forgeries did not in fact present as much moral obliquity as might at first sight appear. It meant very often an honest attempt to restore by memory, or some other means, the documents of title which had been hopelessly lost or destroyed. Thus William of Malmesbury says of similar doings elsewhere :

“Splendivit ibi religio, usque ad Danos, qui . . . locum illum pessemededere . . . at rex Edgarus . . . illud [monasterium] refecit in solidum, undique veteribus cartis conquisitis, quarum testimonio praedia reuocaret ad locum, quæ quidam ex magnatibus senui seu vetustatis auctoritate occuparent ad jus suum.”

“A demand,” says Mr. Plummer, “of this kind never failed to create a supply. Of course in many cases the land may have been justly claimed, though the documents by which the claim was supported were forged.” I would rather say that such an appropriation of lands would have been well nigh impossible, since the jury of the country could at once testify as to who had been in actual possession, receipt of rents, etc.

Putting aside the inserted annals the material of which has been derived from spurious charters and which includes all the notices about Peterborough previous to its destruction by the Danes, let us consider the other insertions. The annal of 1013 describing the purchase of the relics of St. Florentine might well have been derived from the French pilgrims, who, according to the annals, were wont regularly to go to Peterborough to do honour to the saint, and who were descendants of the vendors.

The obits of the abbots contained in the annals of 1042, 1052, and 1066, 1069, 1098 and 1103 were doubtless

¹ *A.S.C.*, ii, 217.

directly derived from some service book, in which their names were recorded, among those for the repose of whom prayers were recited, or else were copied from their tombstones. The original matter in the insertions which may claim to be authentic, and to have some definite historical interest begins with the year 1066, and includes the years 1070, 1102, 1107, 1114 and 1116, and notably the annal of 1070. All these may well have been compiled from the traditions current in the abbey about its later history, and have been derived by the writer from its older inmates, whom he had known and conversed with, the last two entries being within his own memory. None of them was more than 58 years old when the first handwriting in the *Peterborough Chronicle* ends, and if we detach the various insertions here described, which were all written in a late form of speech, from the *Peterborough Chronicle*, we shall have left a fairly homogeneous document written in a uniform style of standard Anglo-Saxon with a few Latin insertions, a document, in fact, which has the special character of the other *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. So far as we can judge, that particular document which no longer survives in the original has been preserved virtually intact, in substance as well as in language, as incorporated in the *Peterborough Chronicle*. In regard to its language, Mr. Earle says that although the orthography has been modified, it is not brought to a uniformity with the insertions, and we mostly find the phraseology of the older books preserved in a mechanical sort of way. But now and then an alteration seems to be forced upon the compiler, where the old phrase was too obsolete to be endured, e.g., in 688; A has *and se papa hine heht Petrus*, B and C only change the archaic spelling of heht to het, but E transforms the expression into *and he him scop Petrum to name*.¹ It is perfectly plain, therefore, and universally admitted that before the year 1124, when Ernulf, bishop of Rochester, died, and probably about the year 1122, some monk at Peterborough borrowed a copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which had been carried down to the year 1121, which he copied out, interpolating in it at intervals, paragraphs and notices about the abbey, some of which he translated from spurious documents, while

¹ *Op. cit.* note xlv.

others came from reputable sources. It is plain that the compiler who did this, actually composed some of the later notices. In these inserted pieces, says Professor Earle, we find a confirmation of the date of E's composition. A comparison of them with the language of the continuation after 1121 places it beyond doubt that the work was compiled at the date when the first hand stops. Similarly, Thorpe, speaking of the local entry of 1114, says: "From here (*i.e.*, when it commences) to the end of the year the language becomes extremely ungrammatical and corrupt, quite unlike the foregoing, but resembling that of the spurious and doubtful charters at pp. 52, 58, 92, 122 and 220, that is to say, the local entries under the years 656, 675, 777, 851 and 963. Of the local insertion in 1116, being the last of these additions, he says, "from here to the end of the year is another corrupt and ungrammatical passage relating to Peterborough, very probably, like the others, the composition of a foreigner."

Let us now turn from the original compilation to the additional matter appended to it. The first handwriting in the MS. of the *Peterborough Chronicle* ceases, as we have seen, with the end of the annal of 1121, whence it is clear that no part of that MS. could have been written before the year 1122. The first break in the handwriting is thus glossed by Thorpe: "Here there seems to be a new scribe and a very indifferent one." He was only responsible for one short annal, for that of the year 1123 is similarly glossed. "Here the ink is paler and the writing larger, perhaps by another scribe." Mr. Plummer says: "Here there seems to be a change of hand. The ink is much paler." Of the annal of 1124, Mr. Plummer says: "Here there seems to be another change of hand and ink; probably a reversion to the hand which wrote the annal of 1122."

The concluding six words of the annal of 1125 and the first six of 1126 forming (apart from the context) an incoherent sentence, partly written on the margin, are also written in a different ink, and perhaps, says Mr. Plummer, by a different hand, while the rest of the two first paragraphs of the annal of 1126 seem to be in the same writing as the main part of the annal of 1125, showing what an accidental tie alone linked the writer and the composer. The next break in the writing is in the

midst of the annal of 1126 and just before its closing paragraph, from which to the end of 1131 the writing is continuous. The continual and aimless changes in the handwriting during the years 1121–1126 point very clearly to the breaches being caused by a fresh pen, or a fresh ink rather than a fresh author. Ingram, in fact, says, that from 1122–1131 we have rather a different ink than different writers. This was also the view of Wanley, who in describing the MS. in his catalogue of the Bodleian MSS. says :

“Quod attinet ad scriptionem hujusce Cod. omnia usque ad finem anni 1121, fol. 81, eadem manu eademque atramento manifeste sunt conscripta. Ex quo lxxx ea folia quo illud praeceunt, eodem anno, eademque manu exarata existimo. Caeterum in folio, nempe ab initio anni 1122, ad an usque 1132 etsi facies atramenti plane alia fit ab eodem tamen scriptore, exarata esse sentio. Quae autem, sequuntur ab anno Chr. 1132, usque ad an 1144, in quo abrupte defuerit codex : aliena manu prioris tamen saecula et imitatione scripta est videntur.”¹

There are only two very short sentences about Peterborough in the annals of the years 1121–1126, one in 1124 where we read of the death of Bishop Ernulf, with the further statement that he had been abbot of Peterborough, and the other the obit of John, abbot of Peterborough in 1125. The other references are all to matters elsewhere, and were probably communicated by other monastic scriptoria in Latin and then duly translated and entered up at Peterborough. As I have said, the change of writing which occurs in the annal of 1126 is not found at the beginning but just before the concluding paragraph, and the same script then continues to the end of the year 1131. Now it is a curious fact, not before noticed, so far as I know, that this interval from 1126–1132 exactly covers the tempestuous abbacy of Abbot Henry at Peterborough.

The section concerning Abbot Henry's career is notable in that it contains a much larger proportion of matter relating to Peterborough than the section which precedes it. Professor Earle and Mr. Plummer have argued that this section was entered up in the *Chronicle* year by year as the events happened and contemporaneously, and for this there is a certain plausible ground. Thus, as

¹ See Hickeys' *Thesaurus*, ii, 64.

Hardy says, "a sentence which may be seen at the end of the year 1126 proves that the writer when he penned it was then ignorant of the issue of a transaction, which, however, he presently enters as concluded in 1128. This portion of the *Chronicle* bears indisputable marks of a contemporary hand on every page; the hopes and fears, affections and antipathies of the writer being all distinctly recorded." This view, however, presents some difficulties, and it will be useful in this behalf to relate the story of Abbot Henry as told in the *Chronicle* in some detail. Henry of Poitou, the abbot in question, was the son of the Duke of Aquitaine and a relative of the king of England. He was a very turbulent and ambitious person, and his career shows how the intrusion of great nobles into the Church had broken down its discipline; thus we read how in his clerkhood he had been bishop of Soissons, and afterwards became a monk of Cluny and then its abbot, and then prior of Savenin, and because he was related to the king of England and the Count of Poitou he was given the monastery of St. Jean d'Angely. He afterwards received the archbishopric of Besançon, which he only held however for three days, and presently secured the Bishopric of Saintes (which was only five miles from the abbey), whence he was removed, as he had been from Besançon, by the abbot of Cluny. He then repaired to King Henry, who was under obligations to him for having given evidence in the divorce suit between William, son of Robert, Earl of Normandy, and the daughter of the Count of Anjou. The king therefore appointed him Abbot of Peterborough.

His appointment was opposed by the great ecclesiastics on the ground that it was illegal to hold two abbacies at one time, but he persuaded the king that he had secured the consent of the Pope and of the abbot of Cluny, and that he was legate for the Rome scot (*i.e.*, Peter's pence). On taking possession of the abbey he at once commenced to make exactions, and his only purpose seemed to be to plunder the place and to send the proceeds abroad. The chronicler compares him to a drone in a hive and says he did no good there, and left no good there, and adds that as soon as his coming was known men had

seen dreadful portents, black hunters with black broad-eyed dogs riding on black horses and black bucks. These were seen in the Park at Peterborough, and in the towns between there and Stamford, and the monks heard the horns blow in the night. This is all related in the annal for 1127, which concludes with the words: "This was his ingang, of his utgang ne cunne we iett noht seggon. God seawe fore": *i.e.*, "This was his incoming, of his outgoing we cannot as yet say anything. May God provide." To which Mr. English adds the apposite note, "That is to say, this was written before 1132."¹ This clearly follows, for, to use Mr. Plummer's words, as Henry was still abbot of Peterborough, when it was written, and as he was expelled in 1132, it was therefore written down before that year, but inasmuch as there is no break in the handwriting of the *Chronicle* till 1132, it would seem equally clear that the entry in question was made in some note book elsewhere and was not entered up in the body of official annals of the abbey, *i.e.*, the *Chronicle*, until some time after. Nor is it possible to believe that any monk would dare to enter in the annals of the abbey in the lifetime of Abbot Henry such bitter phrases about him as are contained in this annal. This is not all, however. The annal for 1128 has a notice which seems important in regard to the history of the compilation of this part of the *Chronicle*. We read in it "May God Almighty have His mercy over that wretched place." This year, Abbot Henry, by the king's leave, went home to his own monastery at Poictou, "and," it adds, "that he had given the king an undertaking that he would entirely give that monastery and land, and live with him *there* (*thaer*) in England and in the Monastery of Peterborough, but nevertheless it was not so. He did it because he would through his great wiles be *there*, were it a twelvemonth or more, and then come again." Neither Mr. Earle nor Mr. Plummer comment on this important phrase. Its language shows that it refers to Henry as still abbot of Peterborough when it was written down, and it must therefore have been copied into the *Chronicle* from some *notanda* kept elsewhere.

¹ *Op. cit.*, 174, note.

Not only so, but as Thorpe long ago very shrewdly pointed out, the use of the word "there" in two of the sentences quoted shows that the paragraph was not written in England but somewhere abroad.¹

The annal for 1129 contains no local entry about Peterborough. In that for 1130 it is stated that Abbot Henry returned to Peterborough, and reported that he had entirely abandoned the abbey of Angely. The same year the abbot of Cluny came to England and visited Peterborough, and Henry promised to cause the monastery there to be made subordinate to Cluny, whereupon the chronicler moralizes thus: "It is said for a proverb, that hedge abides that fields divides. May God Almighty frustrate evil counsels." This concluding clause again is clearly only consistent with its having been written during Abbot Henry's tenure of the abbacy. In the annal for 1131 we read how Abbot Henry went to Normandy and reported to the king that the abbot of Cluny had ordered him to give up to him his abbey of St. Jean d'Angely. He thereupon went thither. The monks of St. Jean proceeded to elect another abbot and drove Henry out, and that abbey was thus lost to Cluny. Abbot Henry then went to Cluny, where he was detained. He then gave the monks there an undertaking that if he might revisit Peterborough he would make it over to Cluny, and appoint officials from Cluny there, and give up to Cluny all the treasures of the English abbey. The annalist again adds an ejaculation, "May God provide for the wretched monks of Peterborough and for that wretched place: now stand they in need of the help of Christ and of all Christian folk." Here again we have evidence that the annal was composed in the year to which it refers, but not at Peterborough.

The short series of annals 1126-1131 inclusive, all have one remarkable feature in common in that each one contains a curiously worded ejaculation, of which I have quoted several. Even the annal, 1129, which has no reference to Peterborough, when referring to the Papal schism says: "May Christ impart counsel for His wretched folk." This points to these annals having been composed by the same person. It is probable that the

¹ *Op. cit.*, ii, 225, note

writer was not living in the monastery during the abbacy of Abbot Henry, and wrote the annals in which he occurs so prominently abroad, and that, having returned to Peterborough again on the appointment of his successor, he then entered the whole series from 1126–1131 in the *Chronicle*. Whatever difference of handwriting there may be in these last annals, there is none in their language during the same years. Professor Earle graphically calls them years of genuine Peterborough chronicling, and he points out the peculiarities of their provincial diction and orthography. The king's name is generally spelt Heanri, and many other words show *ea* contrary to the usual orthography. *E.g.* : weas, wearan, forbearnde, hwear, ðear, seagon, Gleastonbyrig, geameni, heafde, beteahte, heafdor 1101. Such words are rarely found in the earlier parts : *e.g.*, streangðe, heafde. Other novelties in spelling are Norhtwic, Northamtune, Burch 1122, Burch, *id.*, 1124.

A good proof that the breaks in the handwriting in this copy of the *Chronicle* do not imply a breach in the composer is to be found in the annal of 1132. It will be remembered that the last break in the handwriting on it is at the end of 1131. The annal of 1132 then runs on in another handwriting thus : “ In this year King Henry came to this land. Then came Abbot Henry and accused the monks of Peterborough to the king, because he would subject that monastery to Cluny ; so that the king was well nigh cajoled (*bepaht*) and sent for the monks, and by God's mercy and the bishop of Salisbury and the bishop of Lincoln, and the other powerful men who were there, the king learnt that he was treacherous. When he could do no more then he would that his nephew should be Abbot of Peterborough, but Christ would not permit it. It was not long after this that the king sent after him and caused him to give up the abbacy of Peterborough and to go out of the land, and appointed Martin, prior of St. Neots, in his place, and he came in great state to the monastery on St. Peter's mass day.” Every word of this is an echo in style and temper of what has gone before, and is clearly the product of the same writer. This is important since the annal of 1132 is in the same writing as the rest of the

Chronicle to its conclusion in 1154, and was not written therefore before the latter date. The passages about Peterborough in the years 1137 and 1140, and 1154, are also very similar in style to that of 1132.

Let us now turn to the concluding section of the *Chronicle*. From the year 1132 to 1154 inclusive the MS. is written in the same hand. Throughout it bears the mark of one author who apparently did not compile it continuously year by year, but copied it out from notes in a note book, which were afterwards entered together about 1154, for we only find four years in the margin, namely, 1132, 1135, 1140 and 1154, and further there is a mistake in the date of one annal where Henry the First's final departure from England is put under the year 1135 instead of 1133. This block of annals exactly coincides with the career of Abbot Martin.

The *notanda*, as I have suggested, apparently comprized four sections; the first one was limited to the year 1132, and differs from the annals preceding it by being entirely limited to Peterborough affairs. This annal of 1132 is followed by two blank years, nothing being entered in 1133 and 1134. The annal of 1135 has nothing in it about Peterborough and was probably supplied from some other scriptorium. A proof that it was not contemporaneously written is that Henry the First's final departure from England which is set down under this year really took place in 1133. The year 1136 is blank.

The annal of 1137 is really a condensed narrative of the reign of Stephen. Mr. Plummer says: "The account of Stephen's reign was not entered annalistically, but thrown together roughly and without much regard to chronological order after the accession of Henry the Second."¹ After reporting the troubles of the reign the *Chronicle* continues, "In all this evil time Abbot Martin held his abbacy twenty winters and half a year and eight days with great trouble," a phrase showing how long after the events recorded the record itself was made. It then goes on to describe how the abbot enriched the monastery with lands and wall hangings, and removed the monks into the new monastery on St. Peter's mass

¹ Plummer, II, xlvi.

day in the year 1140, and twenty-three years after the burning (that is three years after the annal is dated). He then went to Rome and, as the annal says, got privileges from Pope Eugenius for the lands of the abbey and recovered much land which had been wrongfully appropriated, and planted a vineyard, and made the town better than it was, and he was a good monk and a good man, and therefore God and good men loved him. The annal ends with a short account of the life of St. William of Norwich. The annal of 1138 has no notice of Peterborough, and refers only to the Scotch invasion. That for 1139 is blank. That for 1140 is also a collection of detached notices referring to different years and to various English and foreign affairs, but containing no notice of Peterborough. It is followed by a *hiatus* of four years. In 1145 we have the notice of the death of King Stephen and the accession of his successor, and finally the *Chronicle* closes with the following paragraph :

“That same day (*i.e.*, the Sunday before midsummer day) that Martin Abbot of Peterborough should have gone thither (*i.e.*, to London) he sickened and died, on the 6th of the nones of January, (Jan. 2nd); and the monks within a day chose another for themselves. William de Waterville, a good clerk and a good man, and well loved of the king and of all good men. And all the monks buried the abbot honorably; and even the abbot elect went, and the monks with him, to the King at Oxford; and the king gave him the abbey. He then went to Lincoln and was there consecrated as abbot, and was then received with great honour at Burch and with procession as he was at Ramsey, at Thorney, at Spalding, at . . . beres. He now is Abbot, fair has he begun may Christ him prosper.”

Let us now try and ascertain a little more nearly who the author of the *Peterborough Chronicle* was.

The Monastery of Peterborough was one of the oldest and richest in England. It would be exceedingly curious and in fact inexplicable if it did not, like the other great monasteries, possess before the year 1122 either a set of annals of its own, compiled and kept up in the monastery, or some written history, telling the story of the abbey in a continuous and not an annalistic form. Yet we know of none such. The *Peterborough Chronicle* which was compiled in 1122, and was almost immediately followed by the history of the monastery by Hugo

Candidus, are the only documents of the kind we know anything directly about, and both of them were products of the twelfth century. Nor are there, so far as I know, any MSS. extant of an earlier date than this which came directly from its library. This is in itself a puzzle. The key to it was first pointed out by Professor Earle. In the interpolated annal of 1116, in Codex E, we read that "on Friday, August the third of this year the whole Minster at Burh (*i.e.*, Peterborough) was burnt, with all the buildings except the Chapter house and 'the *Slaepperne*' (*i.e.*, the dormitory), together with most of the town."

Hugo Candidus tells us in his history that he was an eyewitness of the fire. Speaking of the founder, Saxulf, he says, "*Immanissimos itaque lapides in fundamentis coepit jacere, quales octo paria boum, vix unum traherent; quos et nos vidimus cum esset combustum et destructum ipsum monasterium.*" He accordingly tells us how on the second of the nones of August, on the vigil of St. Oswald, "*per incuriam combustum est totum Monasterium, præter capitulum et dormitorium et necessarium et refectorium novum ubi solummodo per tres dies manducaverant, refectis prius pauperibus; sed et tota villa combusta est.*" He attributes the fire to the abbot having lost his temper with the monks when he was angry with them, and when he cursed the house *maledixerat domum*, and suggests it may have been the act of one of the dependents who was himself angry and who lighting a fire, "*ignis arsit, et usque ad tectum pervenit et per omnes officinas usque ad villam volavit . . . ita . . . tota ecclesia et villa combusta est et omnia signa confracta sunt et perduravit ignis in turri novem diebus: nona autem nocte surrexit ventus validus, et dispersit ignem et carbones vivos de turri super domos abbatis, ita ut putaremus omnia officina ardere, quae relictæ erant.*"¹ Professor Earle, in commenting on this terrible fire, suggests as very probable that the monks then lost their books,² a suggestion which is very plausible.

In the *Annales Petrob.*, under the year 1117, we are told, "*Hoc anno novi monasterii nostri fundamentum*

¹ Sparke, 71, 72.

² *Op. cit.* Intr. xciii.

jactum est iii id Marcii,"¹ so that the rebuilding of the monastery was speedily taken in hand. With the rebuilding of the monastery there would be a necessity for the replacement of the library, and as Professor Earle adds, this probably, or almost certainly, explains why a new *Chronicle* was started in 1122. It is not improbable again that the new book was written in the vernacular in order to secure a part of the prestige of the burnt copy, which was doubtless so written, and it was deemed more dignified to make the new annals as like the old ones as possible. Let us now try and discover who among the inmates of the monastery in that year would be competent to carry out such a work. The number of monks, English or foreign, in a great monastery, capable of writing annals or a history, was very small. The life of a monastery was represented only in an infinitesimal way by its *Scriptorium*. If we remember all this we shall, I think, be led to certain conclusions, which, though not entirely new, have not been as universally accepted by more recent writers on the subject as their cumulative force demands.

About the year 1040 there was born at Beauvais a certain Ernulph or Ernulf. He studied under Lanfranc at Bec, and subsequently became a monk of St. Lucian, at Beauvais, where he taught grammar. On the invitation of Lanfranc he came to England some time between 1072 and 1075, and joined the priory of Canterbury, where he continued to teach grammar, and after the accession of Anselm to the see of Canterbury, *i.e.*, after 1093, he became prior of the monastery there, a post he retained till the year 1107. In 1107, Ernulf became abbot of Burgh or Peterborough, and remained its abbot until 1114 or 1115. In 1115 he became Bishop of Rochester, where he died on the 15th of March, 1124, in his eighty-fourth year.² Hugo Candidus tells us in his history that he was a good monk, wise, and father of the monks, and in his time was joy, peace and prosperity. He is spoken of in similar terms in a notice of him in the *Peterborough Chronicle* in 1114.

During the time when he was abbot, two of the

¹ Liebermann, p. 13.

² Wm. of Malmesbury, *de Gest. Pont.* p. 234. the *Hist. Lit. de France*, x, 425,

and Wright, *Biographia Literaria*, II, 79.

monks were *secretarii* or sacristans, namely, Wictric and Reinald or Remald, surnamed *Spiritus*. The latter was probably a Norman, as his name suggests, and had probably been brought with him by Ernulf. We are told they held their office for thirty years, and under their care the number of sacred vessels and rich vestments was greatly increased. Wictric was the older of the two, and presently became infirm, and thereupon Reinald conducted the duties of the office till his death. In regard to his style of *Spiritus* we are told *ita vocabatur, quia parvus erat et spiritualis*. He had a brother named Hugo, surnamed Candidus, who thus also bore a Norman name and who became the historian of the abbey. In a chapter interpolated in his history, and referring largely to himself,¹ we are told that Hugo was professed as a monk at Peterborough by his brother when he was a young man (*in puerili aetate*), and that he always cherished and revered his elder brother. It further describes how he suffered from some form of dysentery when he was young, which caused him to lose a great deal of blood, from which he was cured by the prayers and attentions of his brother and the other monks. From his white and anæmic face he was styled Candidus. I have already quoted Hugo's statement that he was an eyewitness of the great fire in the abbey in 1116. In another notice of the relics in the abbey he has a further reference to himself. Thus he says of them :

“Super omne aurum preciosum est, dextrum brachium Sancti Oswaldi regis, et martyris, integrum in carne et cute manens, juxta votum benedictionis Sancti Aydani episcopi, quod nos oculis nostris inspeximus et osculati sumus et manibus tractavimus et lavimus, cum ostensum fuisset Alexandro Lincolnensi episcopo, et toti conventui et plurimis aliis clericis et laicis, tempore Martini Abbatis in quadragesima die annunciationis dominicæ anno ab interfectione ejusdem martyris cccclxxxvii.”

He then adds some verses, clearly his own, but, as in other cases, attributes them modestly to an anonymous writer,² “in cujus laude quidam hos versiculos veraci voce edidit;” in a later page he mentions that in the same casket (*capsula*) as the arm of St. Osuald

¹ Sparke, p. 68.

² Sparke, p. 34.

was a scapula of one of the Holy Innocents, "quam et nos aliquando vidimus, cum brachium fuisset ostensum Martyrro abbati et magnum miraculum evenerat una vice de ipsa. Nam erat quidam secretarius Burgi nomine Eilricus Cnorri in tempore abbatis Mathiæ, qui cum idem abbas non credidisse quod brachium integrum esset, jussit aperiri sibi capsulam, ac secretarius, cum non haberet manus aptas ad hæc tractanda, incaute accepit ipsam parvam scapulam, quae et inter digitos ejus fracta est; statimque exivit sanguis ex ea et cecidit super pannuum in quo erat involuta; et ita recens est usque hodie, quasi hac die exisset; quod et oculis nostris vidimus."¹ We are told in the interpolated chapter that he was greatly cherished by four of the abbots, namely, John, Henry, Martin and William, by whom he was promoted. Eventually he became sub-prior and "*primitus*" under Abbot Martin, and afterwards retained these posts under William de Waterville.

Hugo, in describing the last acts of his own life, tells us that on the death of Abbot Martin the monks met together, apparently preceded by Walter, the abbot of Ramsey, and selected twelve of their seniors to elect a successor. He himself being the senior of all administered an oath to the rest that they would act in the matter without any personal ends. They eventually elected one of them, William de Waterville, as their prior, and on the day following the funeral, his brother Reinaldus, who was then prior with him "Hugo Spiritus" (which probably meant himself) and the new abbot went to see the king at Oxford, who confirmed their choice. This is the last we hear of him from his own pen, but in the interpolated chapter already mentioned we read that he was dead when it was written. Its author further adds:

"Nunc vero sufficiant hæc pauca de tanto tamque mirabili viro stylo agresti me perorasse, dicendum est quam gloriose.

Obit tandem iste beatus, iste virtutibus ditatus.

Tempore Willelmi Abbatis.

Cujus anima fit in coelis prece Michaelis, Amen."

It is, however, as the historian of the abbey that we are chiefly concerned with Hugo. In the first clause of

¹ *Id.*, 52.

that chapter we have the important sentence about him : " Qui modo defunctus est, qui etiam hunc libellum collegit collectumque scripsit." It seems plain that this chapter which is full of tender and pathetic references to him and to the terrible bodily suffering which his fragile health had caused him, could not have been written by himself, and that the jibes that Mr. English casts at him for his vanity were undeserved, and further that it was the handiwork of the later writer, Walter de Whittlesea. As he died in the time of Abbot William it is equally plain that he could not have been the author of the three concluding paragraphs of the history as printed by Sparke, the first of which describes the deposition of William. For the same reason there cannot be attributed to him two paragraphs on the preceding page to this, commencing with the words *Plane a domino Henrico*, and ending with *vicesimo primo*, referring to the deposition of the same abbot and having no apparent connection with what stands in front of it.

On the subject of Hugo's date some serious misapprehensions exist. Leland in his life of him,¹ says : " Perduxit autem historiam usque ad imperium Henrici tertii, regis Angliæ, quo tempore vixisse illum credibile est." John Bale, in his *Scriptorum Britannicæ centuria tertia*, quotes Leland's statement with approval, and adds : " Claruit anno nati Salvatoris MCCXVI sub rege Joanne." John Pitseus in his work, *de illustribus Anglice scriptoribus*, ætat XIII, an MCCXVII, also quotes Leland approvingly, and adds : " Claruit anno post Christum hominem factum MCCXVII, inchoante regnum apud Anglos Henrico tertio." Vossius² makes him flourish in the later years of John, while Joscelyn says : " Illum dicit, historiam Petroburgensem diligenter collegisse et perduxisse usque ad imperium Henrici tertii." All these statements are mistaken and are based on the confusion of Henry the Third with his grandfather Henry the Second, down to whose reign the *Chronicle*, known under the name of Hugo Candidus, originally extended. For confirmation of this we may refer to another fact. The MS. described by Sparke as in Hugo's

¹ *Libri de Scriptoribus Britannicis*,
c. 265.

² *De Historicis Latinis*, 454.

autograph was clearly that in the Cottonian Library, labelled Otho A 17, which was completely destroyed in the Cotton fire, and is thus described in the 1696 catalogue, fols. 21-76 :

“Historia Coenobii Petriburgensis a prima fundatione ad annum Ch. 1220, aut. circiter, in qua tractat auctor de Antiquitatibus de situ loci de chartis Regiis et Pontificalibus de reliquis sacris, de Abbatibus, etc.”

In the report on the Cotton fire of 1732 is the following note to this volume: “The late John Bridges, Esq., of *Lincolns Inn* had a copy of this whole book” —with the further MS. note:—“No portion of this MS. (*i.e.*, of the burnt MS.) has been found.” It is almost certain that a transcript of this autograph is preserved in the late paper MS. of Hugo Candidus in the Canterbury public library. It is remarkable that the last three paragraphs of Sparke’s text of Hugo Candidus are wanting from this transcript.

It will be noted in further support of this contention that there is no entry in Hugo’s *Chronicle*, as printed by Sparke, relating to William de Waterville’s long tenancy of the abbey, and that there is a complete jump of twenty years from the date of that abbot’s accession to that of his deposition without a single reference. This would be almost incredible if Hugo himself had been responsible for the paragraphs I have criticised, and which are clearly interpolations. It seems plain, therefore, that the work of Hugo Candidus on the history of Peterborough Monastery was brought down to 1155 and no further. What is more remarkable for our purpose is that 1155 is also exactly the year when the so-called *Peterborough Chronicle* itself terminates. Inasmuch as Hugo had joined the abbey, and had been professed a monk in the time of Abbot Ernulf, *i.e.*, 1107-1114 (that is more than seven years before the first writing in the *Chronicle* ends), it is plain that that *Chronicle* was all of it written during the time when Hugo Candidus was living in the abbey and that he was old enough to have written it. Not only was he then living there, but so far as we have any evidence he was the only historian or scholar then an inmate of it, so that in every respect he seems

to fulfil the requirements we need in the compiler of the so-called *Peterborough Chronicle*. The view that he was its compiler as well as the author of the history is not entirely new. It was, in fact, first suggested as possible by Hickes, the author of the *Thesaurus*, and the first really scientific writer on Anglo-Saxon, a man of great judgment and learning. Hickes, speaking of the author of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, says: "Nec mirum unquam videatur, monachum Petroburgensem, qui hoc Chronicon partim transcribit et partim composuit, sive is Hugo Candidus alias White, qui floruit anno mcxxx, etc." Hickes, *Thesaurus*, p. 139.

Mr. English, whose anonymous dissertation on the *Chronicle* I have quoted several times, while attributing the annals from 1132-1155 to Hugo Candidus, attributes the rest of the compilation to his brother Reinald, whom we do not know as a writer at all, and I can see no reason whatever for duplicating the authorship of the book. Thorpe, again, in discussing the annal of 1114, says, "it was probably the work of a friend of Ernulfus to whom we owe the *Textus Roffensis*."¹

That Hugo Candidus was the compiler of the insertions in the *Chronicle* may be strongly supported by comparing the Saxon text of the latter with the Latin text of his history, which it so closely follows, occasionally condensing and occasionally amplifying the corresponding narrative, so that if the insertions in the *Chronicle* were abstracted and put beside each other in a continuous story they would form a double of the history. His Latin, as Mr. English says, gives the precise sense as the English, and his censure and praise of the abbots, when it differs a little in form, is an echo of the same spirit. Nor is it altogether to be forgotten that the two abbots whom Hugo singles out for special praise were his first patron, Abbot Ernulf, and Martin who appointed him sub-prior. Another small but effective piece of evidence is to be found in the fact that the uncommon name Merivald which is quoted in the annal of 656 in the Saxon rescension, but not in the Latin original charter, is mentioned by Hugo.² *Primâ facie*, therefore, it seems almost certain that the compiler of the *Peterborough*

¹ *Op. cit.*, 370, note.

² Sparke, 37.

Chronicle and the historian of the abbey were the same person. This conclusion would long ago have been adopted had it not been for the mistaken views about the actual chronology of Hugo's career, to which I have above called attention. He was, so far as we know, the only person in the Peterborough Monastery capable of doing the work.

We can, I think, support this view by one or two rather potent facts. As we have seen, and as Mr. English long ago shrewdly suggested, Reinald and his brother Hugh, who bore Norman and not English names, were probably Frenchmen or Normans, and did not therefore speak English as their original mother-tongue but as an acquired speech. Hugo's limitation in the knowledge of English as exemplified in his own history was pointed out by the late Thomas Wright in his life of him in the *Biographia Literaria*, where he gives some specimens of his wrong translations; thus he translates Cruland (i.e., Croyland) by *cruda terra* instead of *terra corvorum*, and *bucces* by *haedos* instead of *cervos*.¹ Wright quotes these mistranslations as evidence that Hugo Candidus did not know the language sufficiently well to have been the author of the interpolations in the *Chronicle* and of some of its later clauses. This, however, does not seem quite consequent, for if he did not write the *Chronicle* he certainly wrote the History, which on Wright's own theory was largely a direct translation from the English of the *Chronicle*. There is, however, in an insertion in the *Peterborough Chronicle* a mistranslation which is exactly on all fours with those quoted by Wright from the history of Hugo Candidus, namely, the etymology of Medeshamstede there given. In the very first of the interpolations in the *Peterborough Chronicle*, namely, that of 654, we read of the founders of the monastery that "they named it Medeshamstede because there is a well (*wael*) at this place, which is called Medes wael." This is clearly a mistranslation, as Smith long ago pointed out in his edition of Bede iv, 6, who gives the true explanation of it, namely, *locus habitationis in pratis*, a dwelling among the meadows. This is a remarkable coincidence, but it is not the only evidence that the compiler of the *Chronicle* was a foreigner and not an Englishman.

¹ *Biog. Lit.* 177.

It has been frequently urged that the closing annals of the *Peterborough Chronicle* are very interesting to the students of English, since they are supposed to present us with specimens of the tongue when it was undergoing rapid decay, and was being therefore greatly demoralized. This conclusion does not seem to me to be justified by the evidence. Language, when it changes, changes gradually, and not by violent jumps. Now the most remarkable fact about the *Peterborough Chronicle* is that a large part of it is written in a perfectly normal and classical form of Anglo-Saxon speech, and this right down to the twelfth century, there being little or no variation in it. It is this part of the text written in normal Anglo-Saxon which is the nucleus and substantial part of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, while it is only the insertions which are written in an utterly corrupt speech which is again found in some of the later annals. It is clear that if these interpolations represent a form of normal speech, spoken anywhere at the time of their composition, there must have been side by side, and quite contemporaneously, a language preserving its primitive qualities and one utterly decayed, and both of them used by literary men in such important documents as the official annals of a great monastery. Such a conclusion seems to me absurd. Beside the matrix of the *Peterborough Chronicle* as evidence of the subsistence of perfectly normal Saxon down to the twelfth century, there may be quoted the fragment of a now lost *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was discovered by Dr. Zupitza in the Cottonian MS., Dom. A, ix. This contains some annals of the years 1113 and 1114, that is to say, of a period very near that of the compilation of the *Peterborough Chronicle*. Mr. Plummer says of its language: "The purity of the diction and grammar is in striking contrast with the corruption of E. We have, *e.g.*, midwinter, kinhelm instead of 'Christmas,' Nativity, 'crown'; on maintains its place against the tendency in E to the use of "of," *e.g.*, "abb of Burh" i, 245, E. "Either then," he continues, "there must have been places where the language escaped the corruptions to which it was exposed at Peterborough, or the Anglo-Saxon renaissance, of which

Professor Earle speaks (*Charters*, p. 348), must have come earlier than the close of the twelfth century." Elsewhere the same writer says, the language (of the fragment) is much more classical than we should expect at this date and is another warning that we must not take the latter parts of E as a type of the Saxon written in all the religious houses in the twelfth century.¹ I believe there is another explanation of the facts which has occurred to earlier writers, namely, that the language used by the compiler of MS. E in his translations and in the continuations of that *Chronicle* was not the normal speech of the folk at Peterborough when it was written, but was the English of foreign monks who had not learnt the language properly, and only spoke it and wrote it incorrectly, and that the normal speech of those who conversed in the vernacular at this date is represented by the language of Zupitza's fragment, and of the matrix of MS. E. There is another argument available in the same behalf. It is a notable fact, which was first noticed, I believe, by Earle that in certain places in the *Peterborough Chronicle* where the English is rude and has been treated as a proof of its being late, a corrector has been at work showing that it was considered negligent English even at the time; thus in the annal for 1124 he has corrected heftunege to the literary form heftnunge, and has supplied a "was," showing that "weas" or even "waes" was not according to approved orthography.²

We cannot doubt in fact that in the fen country, where the last great stand of the English race took place, the most conservative tradition in regard to English would be preserved, and that if it had been an Englishman from Peterborough who compiled the *Peterborough Chronicle* its English would have been good English and not this broken speech. As I have said, we have specimens to show what the good English of the time really was. On the other hand, the language of the compiler has the marks of being a Frenchman's English. This Mr. English acutely observed long ago. Thus he says, "we are not to take the last years of the *Chronicle* as a sample of the English of the time, but as a specimen of

¹ *Id.*, ii, § 29.

² *Op. cit.*, Intr., xlix.

the broken English of a French monk." The turn of the sentences seems to be French. In the annal of 1127 we read "Sothfeste men heom kepten on nihtes." "*Des hommes croyables les veillerent par nuit.*" "Saeidon thes the heom thuhte," "*qu'il lui sembloit.*" Mr. English further says, "the characters, in which Codex Laud are written are *but bastard English*. Small, and very neat, and having much the same affinity to our national mode of penmanship as French writing has at present. In proof of this, compare the Laud MS. with either of the copies Tiberius A vi, B. 1, B. iv, all of them the work of English copyists." That the language of the insertions and the continuations is that of a foreigner and not the standard English of the time has also occurred to a later writer, who has done a great deal for the text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, namely, Thorpe. Speaking of the insertion of 1116, he says it was *very probably the composition of a foreigner*. Again, in regard to the annal of 1132 he says: "Here evidently a new scribe begins, *apparently a foreigner.*"

There is, therefore, very substantial evidence for making the compiler of the *Peterborough Chronicle* a foreigner and not an Englishman. This would account for another fact. It is generally admitted by those who have studied this edition of the *Chronicle* that the compiler who inserted the local paragraphs and wrote some of the later annals, *i.e.*, those of 1114 and 1116, used a form of speech very like that used in some of the continuations, and notably those of the annals from 1126 to the end of the *Chronicle*, in which there are certain small differences pointing to some progressive change. Speaking of the series of annals after 1121, Professor Earle finds a certain difference when compared with the insertions of the earlier period which probably marks the increasing familiarity of a foreign student with English, thus he says:

"The diction of the inserted pieces cannot be said to be identical with that after 1121, for the insertions have a slovenliness all their own. I surmise that the drawing up of these instruments was committed to a separate person, who had perhaps special qualifications in that respect, and that the scribe copied his whimsical orthography with scrupulous fidelity, as it was that of legal documents."

A tendency to change the spoken speech as a man got more practised in it, and thus to destroy the homogeneousness of his language, is precisely what we should expect in the case of a Frenchman or Norman who had joined a monastery as a youth and gradually acquired the tongue of his adopted country, but would not be the case with a native-born Englishman.

This analysis points, it seems to me, to one conclusion as inevitable, namely, that the *Peterborough Chronicle* as it stands (notwithstanding any slight changes in the writing) was compiled and put together by one man, and it seems that the only person to whom such a book can be ascribed is Hugo Candidus, who fulfils all the conditions necessary in its author. He was living in the monastery and of a competent age when the first part of the *Chronicle* was put together in 1122, and he was living in the monastery when it was concluded. He wrote a separate history of the abbey in Latin, which is in many cases a mere repetition of the English of the *Chronicle* in another tongue, and which ends at the same date as the *Chronicle*. In his history he deals with persons and events in the same way, and measures them by the same standards. The same materials apparently were used in compiling both, and lastly he was under special obligations to the two abbots whom he singles out both in the *Chronicle* and the history for special laudation, and he was in all probability a foreigner and not an Englishman by birth, which accounts for the peculiarity of his English.

If this view be sustainable it may perhaps enable us to carry our analysis of one part of this text of the *Chronicle* a little further, and to ascertain the authorship of the forged Latin documents translated in its earlier part, which, as we have seen, were almost certainly forged in the twelfth century.

It will be remembered that the earliest patron of Hugo Candidus was the Abbot Ernulf, a scholar and a literary man, but one against whom grave suspicions of literary dishonesty exist. It is very curious that at or about the time when he filled his three principal parts, those of prior of Canterbury, abbot of Peterborough, and bishop of Rochester, forged documents meant to enhance the

wealth or privileges of the two abbeys and the see over which he presided should have made their appearance. For forged charters of Egbert in the *Textus Roffensis*, which was compiled by Ernulf, see my memoir on the life and coins of Egbert.¹

If Ernulf was in fact the forger of the Latin charters just mentioned, or the inspirer of the forgeries, we cannot doubt that Hugo Candidus, who was his *protégé*, was privy to them, if not their actual author. It is, at all events, remarkable that the compiler of the *Chronicle*, whoever he may have been, whether Hugo Candidus or not, should in some cases, as we have seen, in converting the Latin into Anglo-Saxon, have further sophisticated the terms of the language by enlarging and exaggerating the privileges supposed to be granted by the Latin charters.

Having thus tried to identify the compiler of the *Peterborough Chronicle* with Hugo Candidus and analyzed his handiwork, I hope in a succeeding paper to examine the matrix of the *Peterborough Chronicle* apart from, and denuded of, the excretions and insertions of the compiler (whom I have identified with Hugo), and to compare its text with that of other copies of the *Chronicle*.

¹ *Num. Chron.*, 1903, p. 224.