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WITH

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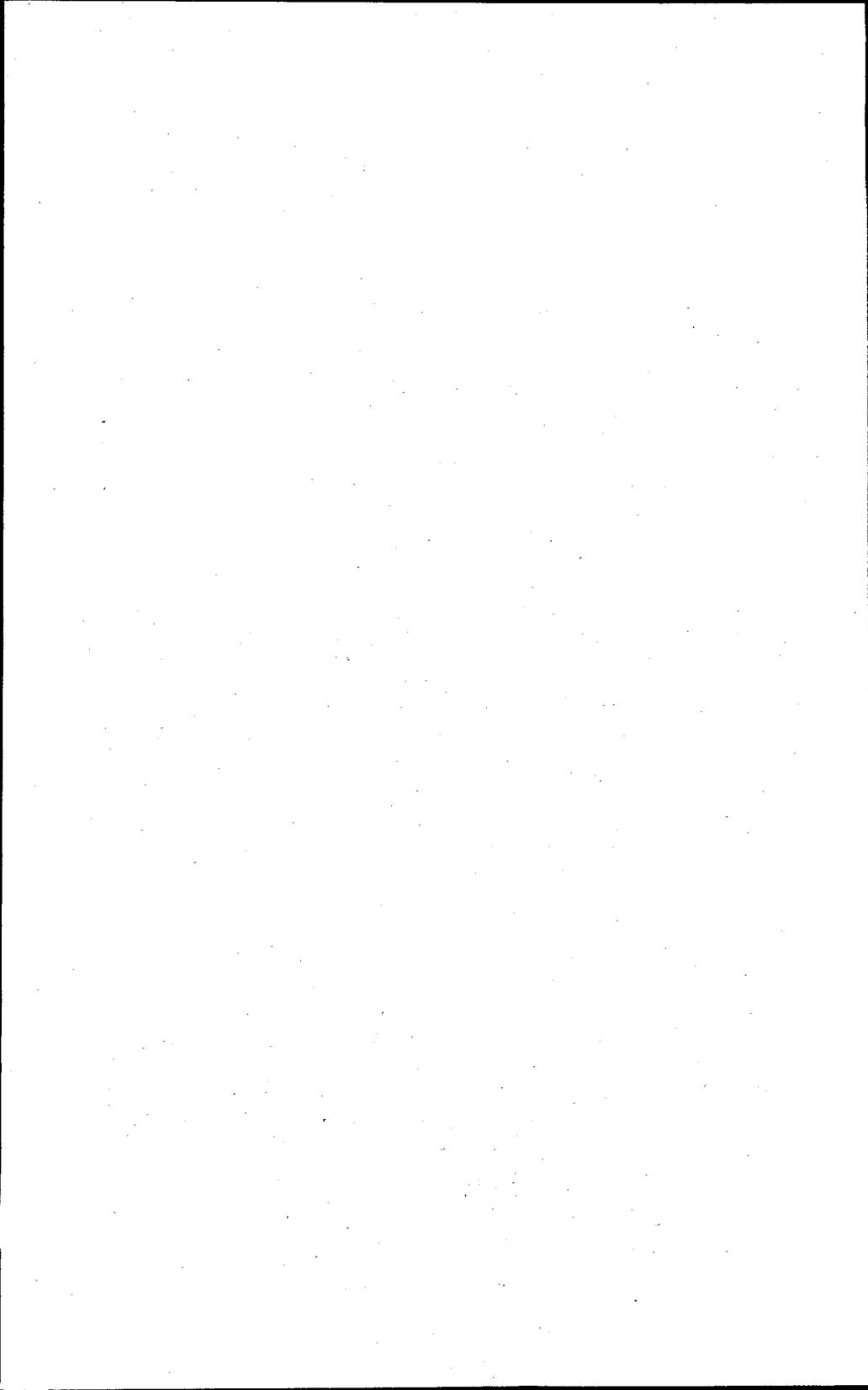
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OF THE
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WITH
COMMUNICATIONS
MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

VOL. VIII.



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Mr M. R. JAMES made the following communication :

ON THE INTERNAL DECORATION OF THE ABBEY
CHURCH OF S. EDMUND AT BURY¹.

WEDNESDAY, *January 24th*, 1894.

F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A., President, in the chair.

ARTHUR GRAY, M.A., Jesus College, made the following communication :

ON SOME TWELFTH CENTURY CHARTERS OF THE PRIORY
OF S. RADEGUND, CAMBRIDGE.

The charters which I exhibit relate to the earliest endowments of the Benedictine Nunnery of S. Mary and S. Radegund. None of them can be called a charter of foundation, inasmuch as the earliest of them recognises the Nunnery as an already existing corporation, and, as I shall show, it possessed landed property at a date considerably earlier than the first charter of King Malcolm IV. of Scotland, who is often, though incorrectly, regarded as its founder. A few words first as to the muniments of the Nunnery, now in the treasury of Jesus College. These are between 600 and 700 in number, consisting mainly of the usual charters of donors, lease-indentures, a few wills, and some other miscellaneous documents ; also three *Compoti* or Account Rolls. Of these last two are on parchment and belong to the years 28—9 and 29—30 of Henry VI. ; they give a very detailed account of the Nuns' income and expenditure at a time when the Priory was in a fairly prosperous state. The third is on paper, and relates to the year 21—2 of Edward IV. ; it is brief and less detailed than the former, but exhibits very clearly the

¹ This paper, illustrated by a plan of the Abbey Church, will appear in the Society's *Octavo Publications*, No. xxviii, after the same author's *Bibliotheca Buriensis*.

financial collapse which contributed to the dissolution of the Nunnery 15 years later, in 1497. The charters range over the whole period of the existence of the Priory, the earliest to which a date can be assigned belonging to 1137 or 1138, the last to 1493. Of the earlier charters the great majority are, as was usually the case before the reign of Edward I., undated; but I think I should not be wrong in estimating the total number of those which may be assigned to the 12th and 13th centuries at over 200. This calculation I do not base on the evidence of handwriting so much as on a comparison of the charters with the returns to the commissioners of Edward I. in 1278, commonly known as the Hundred Rolls. The Hundred Rolls, it may be remembered, give a remarkably complete and interesting account of the tenure of property in Cambridge, mentioning upwards of 600 distinct tenements, and recording in most cases the parish, the then occupant, rent, mode of acquisition, and predecessors in the title. The larger number of the early undated charters of the Nuns contain names of persons, either parties or witnesses, who figure also in the Hundred Rolls. The bulk of their property seems to have been acquired during the reigns of John, Henry III., and Edward I. It was situated almost wholly in Cambridge, Barnwell, and villages in the immediate neighbourhood. In Cambridge they held property, as their deeds show, in all the now existing parishes, as well as in the extinct parishes of S. Radegund, All Saints' next the Castle, and S. John's, Miln Street. Their deeds have therefore a peculiar value in the light which they throw on the topography, and to some extent the social conditions, of pre-academic Cambridge.

A careful Register of the Nunnery muniments was made by Dr Lynford Caryl, who was Master of the College 1758—1780. There also exist two earlier catalogues of the Nuns' and early College evidences roughly written in handwritings *temp.* Q. Elizabeth, one of them supplemented by a later hand *temp.* James I., the first occupying 17, the other 6 pages, which have been bound up with a College lease-book containing leases ranging from 1555 to 1618. Neither of these earlier catalogues

is at all complete, but, so far as they go, it is satisfactory to know that they contain few important deeds which are not still to be found in the College Treasury. A very few—of little consequence—mentioned in Dr Caryl's Register have since disappeared; on the other hand he does not include about 50 deeds of Nunnery date, some early, which I have discovered lately among documents not relating to the Nuns.

If we judge from internal evidence alone we shall give the first place in point of antiquity among the Nunnery documents to a charter of Nigellus, second Bishop of Ely (1133—1169), addressed 'universis baronibus et hominibus S^ce Etheldrythe tam clericis quam laicis tam Francis quam Anglis' in which he confers on the cell lately established ('cellule noviter institute') without Canteburge certain land lying next to land of the same cell. This land is pretty clearly identical with four acres near Grenecroft (i.e. Midsummer Common) which the Hundred Rolls state were given to the Nuns by Nigellus. As however the Hundred Rolls also state that the four acres given by Nigellus were adjacent to the ten acres which were given by King Malcolm it is possible that the grant of Nigellus was later than the first charter of King Malcolm. But the description of the Nunnery as 'a cell lately established' and apparently as yet without title or dedication, is strong ground for placing Nigellus' charter before Malcolm's, if not actually first in time of all the Nunnery charters.

The next two charters which I have selected to exhibit relate to a grant to the Nuns by a certain William Monachus or Le Moyné, goldsmith, of Shelford, of two virgates of land, with 6 acres of meadow, together with 4 *cotarii* and their holding of land, all in Shelford. The two charters confirm this donation: the first is by King Stephen, the second by Bishop Nigellus. Fortunately we are able with practical certainty to fix the date of the King's charter within the limits of a month. It was signed at an interesting time, and informs us of an historical fact not otherwise recorded. It is dated 'apud Mapertes halam in obsidione.' 'Mapertes hala' is Meppershall, a village near Shefford in Bedfordshire. In January 1138

Stephen was besieging Bedford castle, which Milo de Beauchamp had refused to surrender to him. John of Worcester says that the king kept Christmas 1137 at Dunstable, and then 'emensis festivis diebus' attacked Bedford. After taking Bedford he went north to meet the invasion of the Scots, and reached Northumberland on February 2. Mr Howlett, the editor of the *Gesta Stephani* in the Rolls Series, has noticed this charter of King Stephen, and remarks on it, 'The chronicles mention no such event as a siege at Meppershall; but there exists at the present day, close to the church of this small Bedfordshire village, a high mound with a double line of outer ramparts answering in the clearest way to the type-of the hastily built stockaded 'castles' of this reign. Stephen, it thus appears, had to capture this outpost, perhaps during the siege of Bedford in 1138.' Mr Howlett compares with this charter another, dated in 1138 'apud Goldintonam in obsidione Bedeford,' Goldington being a small village a few miles from Bedford. The Meppershall mound, I may observe, is marked as 'The Hills' in the Ordnance Survey: Mr Seebohm has given a small plan of it in its relation to the adjoining church in his *English Village Communities*. We are probably justified then in assuming the date January 1138 for Stephen's charter. William le Moynes's grant may have been made a year or two earlier, as it is made 'pro anima Regis Henrici,' i.e. Henry I., who died in 1135. From a later charter of Nicholas, son of this William le Moynes, I gather that the latter had acquired the Shelford land by gift of Henry I. It should be observed that King Stephen's charter differs from all later charters in the style which it gives to the Nuns: they are 'the Nuns of S. Mary of Cambridge.'

Another charter of King Stephen, mentioned in the Hundred Rolls but long since lost, granted the Nuns a fair lasting for two days, viz. the eve and the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. This fair, the most ancient of the Cambridge fairs, and later known as Garlick Fair, was held in the eastern portion of what is now the Master's garden, but in early College days was a close called the Churchyard close. As it is a well

known fact that fairs connected with religious houses were celebrated on or about the feast-day of the saint to whom the conventual church was dedicated, there is good ground for believing that the monastery was originally dedicated to S. Mary alone, and not to S. Radegund. In the other early charters the Nuns are simply 'the Nuns of Cambridge' or 'Grantebrige,' and it is not until the second charter of King Malcolm IV. and after the conventual church had been founded, that the ascription to S. Radegund appears. In the charter of Bishop Nigellus which I have put along with that of King Stephen, as it confirms the same grant, the Nuns have the full style which is given them in Malcolm's second charter, 'Nuns of S. Mary and S. Radegund.' Nigellus' charter is therefore probably to be dated after Malcolm's first charter, possibly after his second, but certainly not much later than 1160, in or about which year died William of Laventon, the first Archdeacon of Ely, whose name is first among the witnesses to the Bishop's charter. The second witness, Richard of S. Paul's, was the Bishop's son, Canon of S. Paul's and afterwards Bishop of London; he was Treasurer to Henry II., and the reputed author of the *Dialogus de Scaccario*. Before I quit the subject of Stephen's charter, I would point out that it is testified by the celebrated William Martel, Stephen's *dapifer* and chief supporter in his struggle with the Empress Maud, and by Reginald de Warenne, who, along with William Martel, is among the witnesses to the convention signed between Stephen and Henry which ended the civil war in 1153.

The second group of my selected charters belongs to the year just mentioned, 1153, or the early part of 1154. The first of them is a charter of Constance, sister of Louis VII. of France, and widow of Stephen's son, Eustace, Count of Boulogne. It releases the Nuns from payment of hagable and landgable for their lands then possessed or thereafter to be possessed, and grants them all fishing rights in the waters belonging to the Borough. The grant is for the soul of her husband, Eustace, who died August, 1153; for the soul of Stephen's queen, Matilda, who died May 1152; and for the welfare of King Stephen. The charter therefore belongs to the months between

August 1153 and October 1154, when King Stephen died. The gift of Constance is confirmed in two charters, which I exhibit, the first of King Stephen, the second of Bishop Nigellus. Stephen's charter is dated 'apud Cantebreg.' I cannot find any record of his being at Cambridge about this date, but he was at Dunstable at the end of 1153. In all these charters the Nuns are simply styled 'the Nuns of Cantebreg.' The charter of Constance is witnessed, among others, by William Monachus of Shelford. Her solicitude for the soul of her late husband derives a little pathetic interest from the comment of the Anglo-Saxon chronicler on husband and wife: 'He was an evil man, and did more harm than good wherever he went: he spoiled the lands and laid thereon heavy taxes;...she was a good woman, but she had little bliss of him, and it was not the will of Christ that he should long reign.'

I now come to the so called foundation deeds of King Malcolm IV. of Scotland, both of which are exhibited. The earlier has still attached to it the royal seal, in brown wax, having on the obverse side the impression of a king enthroned, holding in his right hand a globe, in his left apparently a sword, and on the reverse side a mounted warrior. It is dated 'apud Huntingdon,' and is addressed to all his men, cleric or lay, of the Honour of Huntingdon. It will, of course, be borne in mind that the earldom of Huntingdon, to which from early times was attached that of Cambridge, was an ancient appanage of the royal house of Scotland. The earldom had been restored to Malcolm by Henry II. in the latter half of 1157, and he was the reputed founder of S. Margaret's Hospital at Huntingdon. It is worth while remarking that King Malcolm was also a benefactor of S. Frideswide's Monastery at Oxford—afterwards converted by Wolsey into the College of Christ Church—and conferred on it the manor of Pidington, Oxfordshire, which belonged to the Honour of Huntingdon. Malcolm's earlier charter confers on the Nuns ten acres of land next Grenecroft to found (*ad fundendam*) their church on it, reserving to himself a rent of 2s., which rent he directs his *minister* to offer on the altar of the same church. The date of this charter cannot be fixed within

quite such narrow limits as the earlier ones. Malcolm received the earldom of Huntingdon, as I have said, in the latter half of the year 1157; the date must therefore be later than that, and as Sherman in his *College History* says that he had seen among the Nunnery muniments a charter, no longer extant, of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, confirming Malcolm's gift, it follows that it must have been made in or before 1161, when Theobald died.

The second charter of King Malcolm is, like the former, dated at Huntingdon; in it he remits the rent of 2s. for which he stipulated in the earlier grant. The Nuns of Grantebrige of the earlier deed, appear in the later with the full style of the 'church of S. Mary and S. Radegund and the Nuns there serving God.' The new ascription to S. Radegund is significant. From the *Chronicles of Stephen*, edited in the *Rolls Series*, I learn that Malcolm with a Scottish army joined Henry II. at Poitiers in July 1159. Poitiers was then and still is the chief centre of the cult of S. Radegund, where she founded her abbey of the Holy Cross, and where her tomb is still the resort of large numbers of pilgrims. It is unquestionable that the second charter of Malcolm is to be dated after this visit to Poitiers, for among the witnesses to it is Nicholas, chamberlain, who I gather from the second volume of the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (edited by Mr George Burnett) did not become chamberlain until 1160 or 1161. On the other hand it seems equally clear that this charter must be dated not later than 1164, for another witness is Engelram, the chancellor, who in that year succeeded Herbert as Bishop of Glasgow. Malcolm's first charter is witnessed by 'Herberto Episcopo de Glasgu,' and as the second one mentions Engelram simply as chancellor it is reasonable to suppose that at the time he had not succeeded to the see. Malcolm himself died in the following year, 1165.

I also exhibit two interesting charters confirming the gifts of Malcolm to the Nuns. One of them, that of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, does not strictly fall within the 12th century as Langton did not become primate until 1207. The other is by Thomas Becket, 'Cantuariensis ecclesie humilis

minister,' as he styles himself therein. It confirms to the Nuns all the lands and tenures granted them by charters, and especially the ten acres of land in Cambridge which the King of Scotland gave them. From the omission of Malcolm's name it would seem that at the time of Becket's confirmation he was still alive. As Becket's charter describes the Nuns simply by their earlier title of Nuns of Cantebriq, it seems probable that it refers to Malcolm's first, not his second charter. Becket became Archbishop in 1162; he left England on November 2, 1164, and did not return until 1170. This charter then is to be dated pretty certainly between 1162 and November, 1164.

The witnesses who test Becket's charter are decidedly interesting persons. The first is Robert, Archdeacon of Oxford: this was Robert Foliot, afterwards Bishop of Hereford, a relation of Gilbert Foliot, the more celebrated Bishop of London, though, unlike Gilbert, Robert was a warm friend and partisan of the Archbishop. The next witness is Philip of Calne, Becket's *emptor* or manciple, who was 'co-exsul' with him in 1165—6. The next is the celebrated Herbert of Bosham, Becket's friend, counsellor, and biographer. The two who follow are the chaplains William and Robert, in whom we may probably recognize William Fitzstephen, and Robert of Merton, Becket's two chaplains, who were with him at the time of his murder. William Fitzstephen also wrote a life of Becket. The third witness of Becket's murder was, it may be remembered, Edward Grim, the monk of Cambridge; several members of the Grim family figure in the early deeds of the Nunnery.

Besides those I have described there are many other charters of twelfth century date in the College Treasury, some of them both interesting and important. But the specimens which I have selected will serve my purpose, if they advertise the fact that in these hitherto almost unexplored documents there exists a mass of information relating to a period of Cambridge history of which it might be supposed that information from contemporary sources was almost wholly lacking—the period between Domesday and the foundation of our earliest colleges. No other college, perhaps, in either University, certainly none

at Cambridge, can pride itself on the possession of records ranging in an uninterrupted series—for the dissolution of the Nunnery and the foundation of the College in its place makes no sensible break in the chronological succession—extending over three quarters of a millennium. The compass of time embraced in this series is illustrated by one fact. In the 13th century the Nuns, as shown by their deeds, owned a portion of the site now occupied by our oldest collegē, Peterhouse; about the same time they acquired a portion of Swincroft, later known as S. Thomas' Leys, which at the beginning of the present century was sold by the College to provide a site for the new foundation of Downing. The world which the earlier deeds reveal is one in which Danegelt is an incident of land tenure, when manors are owned by the same families which held them when the Domesday survey was made, when it was a usual covenant in land transfers that the property should not be alienated to Jews. Incidentally they introduce us to many local celebrities; Hervey Dunning, the knightly owner in King John's reign of the 'School of Pythagoras,' Sir Roger de Trumpington, well known to brass collectors, and Sir Thomas de Cambridge. Of the University in its earliest days they tell us something, though not much; they perpetuate the names of a few otherwise unknown hostels, and explain in many cases the distribution of property on the sites afterwards included in colleges; but religious houses, not colleges, were the important feature of the Cambridge which the Nuns knew. Of course there is a good deal to be gleaned of the history of the Nunnery, but the facts are not of much general interest. The *Compoti*, on the other hand, are valuable and interesting both because they present us with a fairly complete picture of life in an English nunnery in the middle of the 15th century, and because *Compoti* of nunneries are rarely met with. Read in connection with the College Bursars' Accounts the Nuns' documents have much information to give us about some of the picturesque features which once distinguished Jesus from other colleges in the University and recalled its monastic origin—the parish church within the College walls, the fair held in the precincts,

the ancient manor of S. Radegund representing the demesne lands of the Nunnery.

Some of the multifarious matter contained in these documents—I would instance particularly the *Comptot*—deserves a better fate than to remain in the obscurity of a College treasury and subject to the casualties of an existence in MS. If the Antiquarian Society would undertake the publication of either a catalogue of the whole or a selected portion of the originals one purpose which I have in laying these charters before it will have been served.

The PRESIDENT, in opening the discussion, expressed a hope that it would be possible to compile a list of witnesses to deeds, &c., with their trades, as had been done at Oxford.

Dr CLARK asked if the original grant of Garlick Fair to the nuns by King Stephen was extant. He also hoped that Mr Gray would give some explanation of the name Garlick Fair. He stated that the fair was held on the Feast of the Assumption, and that it had been the custom on that day to bless herbs. He thought that perhaps there might be some connection between this custom and the curious name of the fair.

Mr J. W. CLARK said he did not understand how King Malcolm or the Earl of Huntingdon had obtained the large piece of Green Croft on which the nunnery was built, and which was common land.

Mr FOSTER pointed out that the nunnery was founded before the town was incorporated, and that therefore the rights now held by the town had then belonged to the Crown.

Mr GRAY said, in reply, that the original grant of Garlick Fair by Stephen did not exist, but the document in which it was renewed by Henry VI. was preserved. There was a "garlick row" at Stourbridge Fair. The quarters of the town in which the various trades were situated could be made out from leases and other documents in possession of the College.

Mr ACLAND, referring to the name "Garlick" Fair and "Garlick Row" at Stourbridge Fair, said he remembered as a boy that one of the chief commodities sold at Stourbridge Fair was onions.

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