

ART. XVIII.—*The Calder Abbey Gold Coins.* By C. A. PARKER, M.D.

Read at Seascale, June 19th, 1913.

ON the 30th May, 1905, John Hodgson was employed by the late Mr. Rymer to dig a reservoir a few yards from Needless Gill, a little runner on Stords, in the parish of St. Bridget, two miles east of Calder Abbey. In slicing off the turf he found among the grass roots, not more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the present surface, six gold coins piled one upon another. They proved to be six nobles of Edward III., three in perfect condition, the others slightly clipped.

Although the earliest British coins were exclusively of gold, and Roman gold coins were used later on, there was no English gold coinage until 1257, when Henry III. struck a gold penny which proved unpopular and was soon withdrawn. In 1343-44, Edward III. issued gold florins, which quickly followed the fate of their predecessors, to be replaced by nobles, half and quarter nobles. The noble, so named from the purity of the coins which led to their being exported, copied and clipped, was equal to half a mark, or six and eightpence English; in weight it was that of the modern sovereign, 120 grains. They were the finest coins current in Europe.

The fourth issue of Edward III. dates from 1351-77, and the coins show on the obverse; the King standing in a ship, crowned and holding sword and a shield bearing the arms of France and England quarterly. The ship has mast, ropes and steering oar, the hull being decorated with lions and fleurs de lys. Legend—EDWARD × DEI × GRA × REX × ANGL × FRANC × DNS × HYB × & AQT.

On the reverse ; A floriated cross within an eight arched tressure, in centre of cross the letter E for Edwardus, legend—× IHE × AVTEM × TRANSIENS × PER × MEDIV(M) × ILLORVM × IBAT,—(Luke iv., 30), a charm against thieves and clipping, which, like the type, probably had reference to the naval victory off Sluys in 1340.

The fourth issue may be separated into three periods :—

(1) 1351-60, when Edward is styled King of France, but not Lord of Aquitaine.

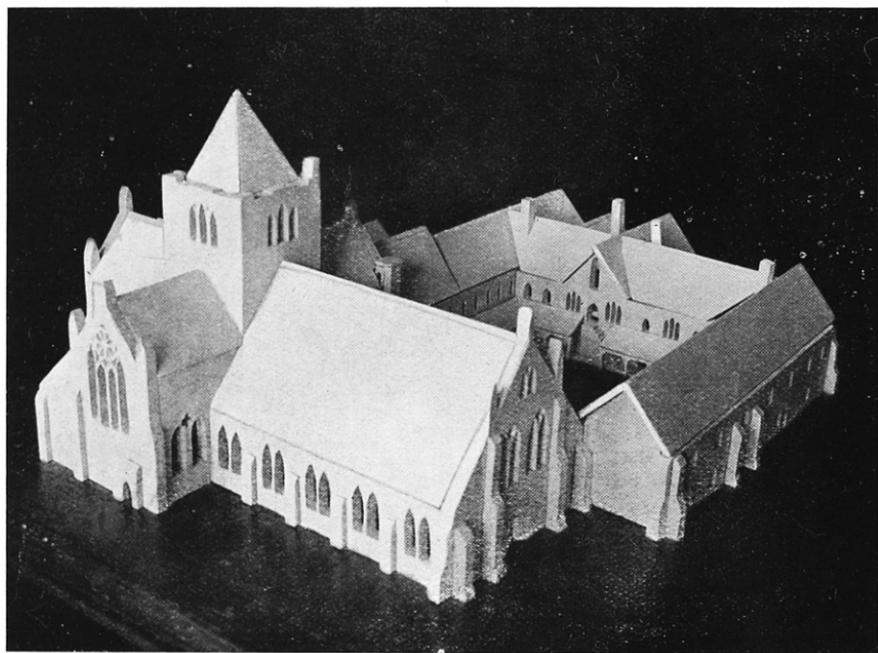
(2) 1360-69, when the title France is omitted in accordance with the treaty of Bretigny, and that of Aquitaine substituted.

(3) 1369-77, when the treaty having been broken, both titles are assumed.

On the earlier pieces the letter N is Roman, and the stops are annulets : on the later ones the English N appears and the stops are saltires.

Of the Calder coins two bear annulets and four bear saltires. Three have AQT, and three FRANC, none being later than 1369. Moreover, slight differences show that all six have been struck from different dies.

Stords is a smooth grassy fell, and there was neither stock or stone or anything else to mark where the coins were. There was no trace of any covering and from their position they seem to have been put down, not dropped. We may imagine some knavish varlet—a lay brother if you will—having stolen the coins from the Abbey, fleeing over the fell rich with a purchasing power of quite £50 in the present day, and avoiding the usual track. He arrives breathless at the little stream and sinks down to rest and drink. Sitting up he looks back, no one is in sight, all seems well. From his wallet he draws his ill-got gain and gloats over it. Again he looks round ; all is quiet, the sun is hot, his hand sinks by his side and he mechanically places the coins in a pile beside him. Almost



MODEL OF CALDER ABBEY, RESTORED.

TO FACE P. 327.

drowning in the heat, he suddenly starts, bounds up; there is a sound of distant shouting, barking of dogs. Away he runs over beck and brow, forgetful of his treasure, away round the friendly shoulder of the hill. How far does he get before he discovers his loss? What becomes of him? Caught or not, one thing is clear, he never came back. The grass grows over the sparkling coin and over five centuries go by ere a random spade disturbs them for our pleasure.

I also exhibit a model made of holly wood, by Robert Lees Barnes and Gerald Griffiths of Gosforth, from drawings by myself. It is intended to illustrate to some extent the arrangement and appearance of the Abbey buildings when complete, from a study of the ruins, fragments, old pictures, and plans of other abbeys.
