

ART. IV.—*On a thirteenth-century Manuscript of the Epistolae of St. Augustine, formerly belonging to Conishead Priory.* By H. S. COWPER, F.S.A.

*Read at Carlisle, April 22nd, 1926.*

THE reformation and consequent dispersal or destruction of the monastic libraries have probably left us comparatively few manuscripts which we can definitely associate with northern monastic houses, so that I counted myself fortunate in securing, last September, from a Leicester bookseller, a fine 13th-century Latin Manuscript formerly belonging to the Priory of Conishead in Furness. Conishead was a house of Austin Canons Regular, or in other words an Augustinian priory of the rule of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa (A.D. 354 to 430).

The special interest of this volume is, I think, in the fact that it contains a selection of the writings of St. Augustine; and as the Priory, founded as a hospital in the time of Henry II, was apparently promoted to the dignity of a priory before 1184, it follows that the book, written in the early 13th century, would probably be held among the most cherished possessions of the fraternity.

The volume, which is bound in a good modern calf binding with clasps probably dating about 1830, measures 14 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches by 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. It contains 176 pages of fine vellum, and some of these pages are spliced or made up of two pieces so as to get the full size; and this is so skilfully done that it is necessary to hold the page up to the light to examine the join. This joining is original, the junction

**O**mo tanto honorabili patri au-  
gustino episcopo summo. Bonetaci.  
Tunc scitatur epistolam amno-  
nu me intransitum suscepi.  
Et tunc uenit papa si tunc ille legiti-  
mus accessus sit paucos. quo debet pu-  
mri supposito diuina qui remeant ratio-  
net. Arguet q. pfecto qui diuina atq.  
humana neglert. et quon libido preue-  
nit. gladii uice absumet. Cumq. que i  
sobrium in tantis angustis fama uerdi-  
ca publicatur. carerit pium quocumq.  
supplicio custodia retinebit. hie epla aus.

**Q**uo ad bonetacum. reuin.  
quis diligo. arguo et castigo. H  
occeidi desido. nec carcere pleno  
sq.ualore retrudi. Sola fuisse  
ammonito. Porro enim si ei diuinit' conce-  
datur temp' p'ine condonari. qui domi-  
ni templi ausus. uiolare. Sic q. ipe q. se  
ut. sui arbitrio uoti. fas est no. ut re-  
epi suggestiohibita occidatur. qui uenit si  
penitenter reseruatur. Nam si in barba-  
rie erroribus uelim' ut condecet gerere ui-  
ditam. paucos repient' nec ipso ammolo  
ad pugnam fore. iam eisdem ad cum

**D**io nullum temp' q. em. reit.  
magnifico filio bonetaci. au-  
gustinus episcopus. Affine licet ut au-  
dio miles attingit christiannus.  
si huius meriti dux a catholica uitate di-  
scerit. Quid orem sicut oportet ignoro.  
Ad yralia hostis. public' nunciat. cont-  
uicinia signa supbas erigent hastas. Pa-  
tem int' uos fieri uellem. si serem plen'  
quod ignoro. Ad. quid affrice olim para-  
tum in yralia bellum. sed tam no mu-  
do fili hinc romane. sed dico quod sen-  
do. Non dabit diuinitate nuntante ca-  
stolice heretico targa. Et in cordis interito

dirigat ad diuin. non militum tenebris.  
no gorbum et humum. Reliqui bonetaci

**D**no scio ei ad augustinu. .c.  
pat' aus. episcopus. bonetaci. Scio q.  
sit tua scitatur p mea una soluta  
ta. que aduersus me p'nam  
ille ordinatur ac disponat. anq. tuum  
sacdocti scriber noui. Obuiam ad more  
ut' tendentibus. quos iure uicane ut credi-  
mus faciet. xpe addictos. Si si erga me  
meosq. omis aliud uoluit ordinare diui-  
nitat. pcare ut uiam delibet ds. et dabit  
operent' aduicario sed uice responsi.  
Impugna enim utriq. descurt furor. sed  
ds inspirat cas. Ignat ora ut dmi. et  
umet una tuncas nobis. Item ad cum

**Q**uo ad bonetacum. reuin.  
ilectissimo cum augustinu. ci.  
et spectabili uiro filio bonetaci.  
no. aus. episcopus. Alio qm sub  
ro fidei mus ariel regit in  
mici. Huius enim qua religione semp sit  
elehas ueniat. quod instigante furor  
hoiem de eccla rapuisti. Tunc si de tuo  
amico forte psumeret fugiuisti. poss-  
preludubio intercessit causa ueniam p-  
meri. Ergo si amice intenditur. cur ds  
offenditur. Et si de prestate psumi-  
tur. in abugodonolo regem intende-  
qui causa supbie in bouem. et. et hie  
amitat. Nonne confunda te hec scri-  
bo. si ut filium meum carissimu mo-  
neo. Ecce q. ille sum reuoca. quem ut  
irreligiosissimi rapuisti. Oblatio si do-  
mus tue a clerici ne suscipiat' inhi-  
ri. amunionemq. et interdico. donec p-  
acto p ausib' ul' errore. a me desinito t-  
mer p'ine tempore. condonato p'ior fac-  
to coide contrito et humiliato. dignu  
offerat sacrificium deo. Reliqui bonet-  
faci. ad. augustinum. cy.

Abugodonolo in  
matum.

being written across in exactly the same hand. Holes or defects in the skin have been filled up in similar manner.

The vellum pages themselves measure  $14\frac{3}{8}$  by  $10\frac{3}{8}$  inches, beautifully written in two columns\* and throughout in excellent condition. There are no paintings, but the table of contents has painted red and green capitals, and there is one large illuminated capital at the beginning of Epistle I. Throughout the volume are many characteristic capitals done in blue, red and brown paint, with red and blue line penwork. The pages are singularly free from later annotations or marks; but there are in places rudely drawn hands pointing with the index finger to passages, and marginal pen-drawn bracketlines, intentionally sketched into caricature-like fat faces, which I like to imagine humorously portray the features of one of the worthy Priors.

Mr. J. P. Gilson, keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum, describes the volume as follows:—

It is a well written copy, written, I have no doubt, in England, in the first half of the 13th century. It is, however, fairly typical of a class of patristic MSS. The order in which the letters are transcribed seems to point to a fairly close connexion with Royal MS. S.C. vii, in the museum, which belonged to the London Blackfriars and was written about the same period.

Now for the evidence of its local history. This is found in inscriptions and letters at the beginning of the volume. Here we find a paper page bound in with the following inscription in a hand which I should guess as about 1760. It runs:

A manuscript  
Formerly belonging  
to  
the Monks of the order of St. Agustin  
at  
the Priory of Conishead in Furness  
and on the back of the same page:

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\* Space occupied by the columns of writing 10 inches by 7 inches.

## CONTENTS

The 139 Epistles of St. Agustin Bpp of Hippo in Africa  
 St. Agustins Sermon to the people in favour of the Clergy  
 his sermon of the Life and manners of the Clergy

his Treatēs { against the five hereses  
 { against the Adversaries of the Law and Prophets  
 { this is imperfect

N.B. Part of the 20th Epis and from the 20th to 30th inclusive  
 are lost.

I suggest that this inscription was written either by  
 Dodding Braddyll (d. 1749), his son Thomas Braddyll  
 (d. 1776), or possibly by Christopher Wilson of Bardsey  
 Hall who married Margaret Braddyll, sister to Dodding,  
 and who died 1773. Christopher Wilson seems to have  
 been a somewhat remarkable man, a Captain in the  
 Hon. E.I.C.S., and the late Rev. T. N. Postlethwaite told  
 me he was fond of making notes on the fly leaves of his  
 books. It is curious that his parentage never seems to  
 have been definitely settled.

Then we have the bookplate with 15 quarterings of  
 Wilson (Gale) Braddyll the grandson of Christopher  
 Wilson. This gentleman, born Gale, assumed the name  
 of Braddyll in 1776 and was the intimate of the Prince  
 Regent. Then we have the following record on the page  
 glued to the modern binding:—

Presented to me Augt. 1867  
 by Edward Richmond Gale Braddyll Esqre  
 and his three sisters Fanny Margaret  
 and Jane Braddyll, as a memorial  
 of an arduous Trust on their behalf  
 which I managed from 1846 to 1864.

J. Sotheron Estcourt.

and in a printed slip ESTCOURT LIBRARY.

There is also a letter mostly on private affairs from  
 Fanny (Frances) Braddyll to J. S. Estcourt.

It seems fairly clear that the MS. was treasured as a  
 Conishead relic from at any rate about 1750-60; it was

bound somewhere about 1830 by Soulby of Ulverston, and in 1843 it is mentioned in Jopling's *Sketch of Furness and Cartmel* (p. 157) as being then preserved in the library of the magnificent modern chateau, and having belonged to the monastic library. Col. T. Richmond Gale Braddyll, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, and builder of the modern house, was amongst other things a collector, but I do not think he acquired this from outside sources. I think it far more likely that it had remained at the Priory from the Reformation, in the possession of the various Sandys, Doddings and Braddylls, uncared for as such things were. During this time it lost its ancient binding and certain parts. Colonel Braddyll had it repaired and bound, and treasured it; but when bad times came and the great house was sold, it was preserved by the trustees, and ultimately, as we have seen, passed into the possession of Mr. Sotheron Estcourt, a connection by marriage.

It is not the place here to speak of the life of St. Augustine, the greatest of the four great fathers of the church. But the influence of his teaching may be judged from the fact that in England alone there were 200 houses of Augustinian Canons and sixty of these were among the greater monasteries. The so called Rule of St. Augustine was adopted in the 11th century, but as a matter of fact Augustine never wrote a rule,\* and the rule was a later compilation. Gibbon† says that when Hippo was sacked by the Vandals, his writings were saved, and consisted of two hundred and thirty-two separate books on theological subjects, besides a complete exposition of the Psalter and the Gospel, and a copious magazine of epistles and homilies. We still possess about 400 sermons ascribed to him with certainty.

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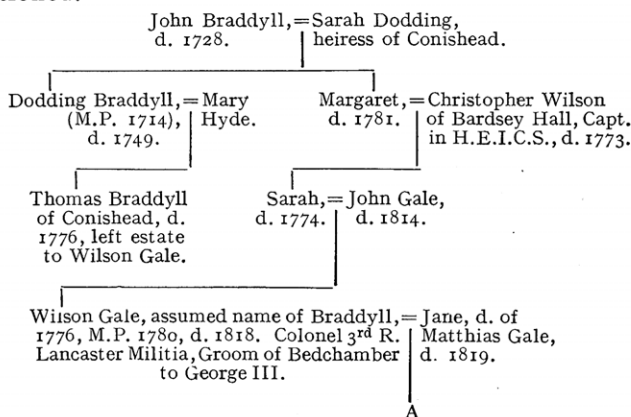
\* Epistle 211 is a long letter of practical advice to a community of nuns; and sermons 355-6 describe the common life among the clerics of Hippo. *Encyc. Brit.*

† Ch. xxxiii; vol. iii, p. 407 in Bury's ed.

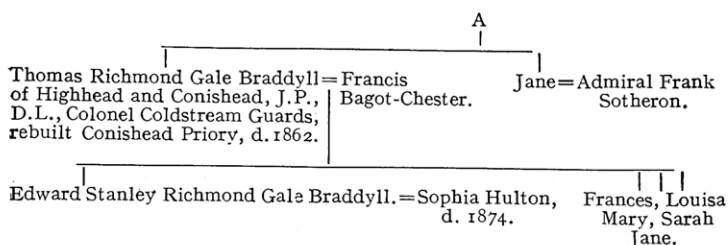
In Cumberland there were houses of the Austin Canons at Carlisle and Lanercost; in Lancashire at Cartmel, Conishead and Burscough Priors. In Lancaster there was a hospital of Austin Canons, and at Penrith there were Austin Friars.

The manuscript is therefore an interesting relic of pre-Reformation religious life, within the area so long worked by our Society. It has found a permanent home in Tullie House Museum; and it should be remembered that in 1102 the house of Augustinian Canons was founded at Carlisle, and out of this in 1133 Henry I created the Bishopric. Further this was the only cathedral chapter of regular canons of St. Augustine in England.\* It was dissolved in 1540. It therefore seems very fitting that letters of Augustine should be in a museum close to the precinct of the great church which (since 1856) has also been the cathedral of the enlarged diocese which includes Furness.

The following sketch pedigree shews the descent of Conishead since 1728, and the relationship of the persons mentioned.



\* *Encyclopaedia Britannica* under Carlisle; Lysons *Cumberland* xxxi; Hutchinson, 609, 617; Tanner *Notitia*, also these *Trans.* o.s. vi, 265. But Prestcott (Wetherall, p. 486) and Wilson (*Vict. Hist. Cumb.*, ii, 131) take a different view of the matter, and put the date of foundation about twenty years later.



In conclusion I have to thank Mr. J. P. Gilson, the Keeper of the MSS. at the British Museum, for examining the manuscript, and confirming my opinion as to its date.

He writes:—

The enclosed, if a rather hasty collation may be trusted, is a statement of the defects in your MS. I give the references to the *Patrologia Latina* of Migne. The new edition of the letters in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiast.* (Vienna) is not complete and lacks an index, so references to that would entail more time than I can spare.

S. Aug. Epistolae.

Missing.		"Vetus Ordo"	Migne. P.d. xxxiii.
1 leaf from ep. v	= 5	=	cxxxviii.
1 leaf epp. xiv (pt.)—xvi (pt.)	32-34	=	{ xxvii. xxx. xxxi.
3 quires epp. xx (pt.) xxxi (pt.)	38-41 43-50 (pt.)		{ ccxliii. xxvi. xvi, xvii. cxxxvii. ccxiv. ccxv. xciii. cii. clxxxv.
1 quire ep. xxxvii (pt.)— xxxix (pt.)	56-58		{ cxviii. clxxxvii. cxxi.
1 leaf lost, sermon no ccclvi (Migne) pt. 38 leaves lost, contra v haereses (pt.) imperf. at end.			