

ART. I.—*A Note upon the connections of Furness Abbey with the Isle of Man.* By W. T. McINTIRE, F.S.A.

NOT the least interesting chapter in the history of the great Cistercian abbey of Furness is that which concerns the part played by that religious house in the administration of affairs both ecclesiastical and temporal of the Isle of Man. It seems strange, therefore, that though Manx records abound in allusions to the authority exercised in the Island by the abbots of Furness, a search through the volumes of these *Transactions* is rewarded by but a few bare references to this important branch of the external activities of the abbey. A few brief notes upon this long and intimate connection between Furness and Mann may therefore prove of interest to some of our readers.

The origin of the exceptional privileges enjoyed by Furness in the Isle of Man may be traced back to the 12th century when that island was under the rule of a dynasty of Scandinavian kings. One of these kings, the pious Olaf I, after a period of violence and confusion which had followed the death of his father Godred Crovan in 1103, became undisputed ruler of Mann in 1111. Educated at the English court and a life-long friend of the English king, Henry I, Olaf had probably conceived an admiration for English institutions, and was evidently anxious to imitate them as far as possible in stabilising his island government. Moreover, he appears to have been desirous of introducing into his realm the monastic system of ecclesiastical government, the rapid growth of which he must have observed in England.

As a means to this end he sought the aid of the recently founded abbey of Furness, then a house of the Savignian

order, and probably consulted its abbot, Eudo or Ivo de Sourdevall. Perhaps at his instigation, in 1134, Olaf founded on the Silverburn, in the village of Ballasala and the parish of Malew, on a site probably already occupied by the old Celtic monastery of St. Lua or Leoc,* the religious house afterwards known as Rushen Abbey, and granted it to Furness abbey (see Kermode and Herdman, *Manks Antiquities*, p. 114).

Olaf's foundation charter upon which Furness abbey founded its claim to elect the bishops of the Isle of Man, may be translated as follows:—

Olaf, king of the Isles, to all sons of the holy church of God and to all the faithful both now and in the future Salvation. Since an earthly kingdom is never well ordained unless the Heavenly King is worshiped in a catholic manner, I, therefore, Olaf, by the advice of the wise and the approval of all good men, have ordained and decreed that in my realm the Christian faith shall rather be preserved united by its own bishop than that it should be divided and laid waste under strangers and as it were hirelings seeking their own interests and not those of God. Know therefore and bear witness to the truth that, prompted by this consideration, I have given and granted for ever to the church of St. Mary of Furness, on account of the proximity of its site and yet more on account of the goodly life of the members of that house, the right of the election of bishops and the observance of the Christian faith throughout my realm, saving always the reverence due to the apostolic see. And that this may the better be done and more firmly maintained, I have granted in free and perpetual alms, as another charter witnesses, a certain part of my land to the aforesaid church for the building of an abbey. Witnesses:—Eudo (abbot), Gill (prior), W. (monk), William and Hugh (priests), Turkill son of Fohgel, Joh. son of Macmar, Gill, Fin, Snetol son of Cutell and many others without whom the matter can be carried out. At Hou Ingren.

(Duchy of Lanc. *Cartae Miscell.* i, 30. Printed in Beck, *Annales*, 123 and in *Furness Coucher*, vol. ii, part iii, 708-709).

* Sacheverell in his *Account of the Isle of Man*, written in 1702, states that this abbey of St. Leoc was founded in 1098.

The foundation of Rushen abbey and Olaf's charter not only established the supremacy of Furness abbey in the religious affairs of Mann but also made the abbots of Furness influential landholders in the island. Olaf was liberal in his grants of land to the abbey. From the bull of Pope Eugenius, in 1152, and from an appendix added to the *Chronicon Manniae*, a chronicle compiled by the monks of Rushen, we learn that these lands were: "The lands of Carnalect as far as the monastery of St. Leoc (the site of Rushen abbey), with their appurtenances; the village of Thore, son of Asser (Kirk Michael); the village of Great Malau (Malew?); the lands of St. Corebric and Fragerwl." (See Chart. Furness, *Manx Soc.*, vol. vii pp. 8-11, quoted by A. W. Moore in *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, pp. 34-35). In addition to these lands were others in Lancashire, and Dugdale informs us (*Monasticon*, i, 712) that Furness also received one-third of the tithe of Mann, the other two thirds being granted respectively to the bishop and to the parochial clergy. Other grants will be mentioned later in the present article.

The abbot of Furness in virtue of these possessions became one of the eight "spiritual barons" of the Isle of Man, the others being the bishop, the abbot of Rushen, the abbots of Bangor, and Saball in Ireland, the prior of Whithorn, the prior of St. Bees and the prioress of St. Bridget's in Douglas.

To the wide influence in the temporal affairs of the Isle of Man acquired by the abbots of Furness as spiritual lords and important landholders in the island was added the right of the election of bishops. This right is clearly set forth in a letter written about the year 1139 by King Olaf to Thurstan, archbishop of York, requesting the archbishop to consecrate a newly elected bishop of the Isles. The relevant passage in this letter may be translated as follows:—

Moreover we inform you that lord abbot E(udo) of the of abbey Furness, from whose borders we are not far distant by sea, when

we heard the report of the religion of that place, at our thrice repeated petition and persuasion, having boldly undertaken the journey arduous as it was, and with due amends for the toilsome labour of the journey and his fruitful labour to spread the influence of the church, by God's favour, arrived at our court. And finally both by our decree and with the consent of the people it was established among us that a bishop should be elected from among his (monks) to be set at the head of the propagation of the Christian faith throughout the Isles. (From the *Registrum Magnum Album* at York. Printed in Beck, *Annales*, 123, and in *Furness Coucher*, vol. II, part iii, 709).

The words "with the consent of the people" will be noticed in the above letter, and the usual practice in these earlier days appears to have been for the monks of Furness to elect one of their number as bishop, but for the approval of the king and the people as well as that of the monks of Rushen to be necessary before he could be consecrated. (See A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, 59).

In the earlier years of this arrangement the bishops were consecrated by the archbishop of York, but late in Olaf's life, when owing to the troubles caused in England by Stephen's disastrous reign, the Manx sovereign returned to his Norse allegiance, the ceremony was performed by the archbishop of Drontheim and the see became established as that of "Sodor and Man."

The choice of the bishops by the Furness monks does not seem to have been always a happy one. Thus their very first bishop, if indeed he was the notorious Wimund, possibly the "W. (monk)," who witnessed Olaf's charter, was a man utterly unfit to hold his sacred office. The career of this adventurer, his probably fictitious claim to be the heir of the earldom of Moray, his filibustering incursion into Scotland, his defeat and mutilation and his final death at Byland abbey, as related by his contemporary, William of Newburgh, have formed the subject of an article by Mr. T. E. Casson, to which the reader is

referred (these *Transactions*, N.S. xxxix, 1-14). There seem also to have been quarrels over these elections, for in a letter to Robert, dean, and the chapter of York, written by King Olaf between the years 1140-1144, the king requests them to send back to his people Nicholas, the bishop elected and consecrated. It appears that the monks had raised objections and Olaf adds "Let not the outcry nor unjust complaint of the monks of Furness disturb you one whit, for if they hold not their peace they will rather lose what they seem to hold among us, because it does not seem to prosper with God or man, than attain any other end." (Brit. Mus. Claud. B. iii, f. 131d. Printed in Beck, *Annales*, 169 and *Furness Coucher*, vol. II, part ii, p. 710).

This was probably not the only occasion on which the monks of Furness proved contumacious, and in fact the history of the Isle of Man under the immediate successors of Olaf shows an ever increasing tendency on the part of Furness abbey to usurp authority. This attempt to dominate became all the more pronounced after 1144 when Furness abbey and consequently its daughter house, Rushen abbey, were brought under the sway of the Cistercian order.* The Cistercians were exempt from episcopal visitation and were subject only to the rule of the pope and their own abbots. The privileges granted to Furness and Rushen were thus destined to prove the foundation of an ever increasing papal influence in the government of the Manx church.

Olaf I died in 1154, but his son and successor, Godred II, seems to have been anxious to maintain friendly relations with the neighbouring English religious houses. He confirmed Olaf's charter to Furness abbey (see *Furness Coucher*, vol. III, Part ii, 710). He also granted to Holm

* For an account of the manner in which this change was brought about see an article "Furness and Savigny," by R. O'Neill Pearson, in these *Transactions*. N.S., viii, 1-11.

Cultram abbey free entrance to and exit from his land with one ship and its boat for monks, lay brothers and their men, goods and chattels, with leave to buy and sell for their own use whatever they needed without tolls. Similar charters were granted to Holm Cultram by Reginald I (1187-1226), Olaf II (1226-37) and Magnus (1252-65). (*Reg. of Holm Cultram*, p. 94).

To St. Bees' Priory, by a charter the date of which must be c. 1175, Godred granted "Eschedala" and "Asmundertoftes." These places were identified by Canon Quine with the Dhoon and Ballellin respectively (*Proceedings of the I.O.M. Antiquarian Society*, vol. II, part iii, 222). This grant seems to have affected Furness abbey through the interests of its daughter house, Rushen abbey. In his charter Godred expresses some doubt as to the validity of the grant of Asmundertoftes which he had given in exchange for "the church of St. Olaf and the small vill which is called Eustad." He adds a warning to the statement of his grant: "If I am not able peacefully to guarantee it (Asmundertoftes) to them, I will give them an equivalent of equal value from the lands nearest and most necessary to them which shall be able to be found free in my own hands." (*Reg. St. Bees*, p. 72).

It would appear that the monks of Rushen abbey disputed later the claim of St. Bees to Asmundertoftes and that the decision went against them, for during the keepership of the Isle of Man by Bishop Antony Bek (1298-1311), Rushen was forced to quit-claim Asmundertoftes to St. Bees (*Reg. St. Bees*, p. 75), and the transaction was confirmed in 1302 by Bishop Bek himself (*ibid.*, p. 78-9). From another act of Godred Furness benefited indirectly. In 1176 he granted to the abbot of Rievaulx land at "Mirescoge" (probably Ballamona in Lezayre) to build a monastery. The monks of Rievaulx apparently abandoned the enterprise, and according to the chartulary of Furness in 1238, the land and building were afterwards

given to the abbey of Furness "to build it of the Cistercian order" (A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, pp. 36-37).

The reign of Reginald or Ragnvald, Godred II's successor upon the throne of Mann, marks a still further extension of the papal authority in the island. Reginald whose character in many respects resembled that of his contemporary, King John of England, found himself, like that monarch, in opposition to the increasing power of the Roman see, and after many reverses, was finally, in 1219, forced to surrender his kingdom into the hands of Pandulf, the pope's legate. He was restored to his sovereignty only after many humiliations and on the condition that he should pay a tribute of twelve marks sterling at Candlemas each year in the abbey of Furness (Rymer, *Foedera*, I, 156). Reginald seems to have been well disposed towards Furness. He confirmed Olaf and Godred's charters to the abbey (*Furness Coucher*, vol. II, part iii, p. 711), and after his death in 1226, in conformity with the wish expressed in his life-time, his remains, escorted by monks from Rushen and his own personal attendants, were brought to Furness abbey for sepulture (Beck, *Annales*, p. 195). It has been suggested that the effigy of a warrior in chain mail, to be seen at Furness abbey, comes from Reginald's tomb, but the style of armour would imply a somewhat later date, and the suggestion, made by the editor of Baines's *History of Lancashire*, that the effigy is probably that of William de Lancaster (III?), a benefactor of the abbey, seems more reasonable.

The influence of the abbots of Furness in the Isle of Man waxed with that of the Roman pontiff and in 1194 their claim of the right of election of bishops of the Isles was solemnly ratified by a bull of Pope Celestine III, part of which may be thus translated:—

In choosing a bishop of the Isles we confirm by our apostolical authority the privilege which the kings of the Isles, Olave and Godred his son, vested in your monastery, as it is expressed in the original grants. Dated at Rome, the 10th of the Kalends of July and the 4th of our pontificate.

It is not improbable that the leaden seal, found in the ruins of the abbey and bearing on the reverse the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul and on the obverse CELESTINUS . PP . III, was the seal appended to this document (see J. Richardson, *Furness Past and Present*, II, 69). This right of Furness to choose the bishop of the Isles was further re-affirmed in 1219 by Pope Honorius VI who refers to "our beloved sons of the monastery of Furness, to whom belonged the election of the bishop of the Isles," and again in 1244, by Pope Innocent III, who, however, adds the proviso that this right was dependent upon the correctness of their allegations (see A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, pp. 68-69).

In fact this right, in the assertion of which the abbots of Furness were naturally persistent, seems to have been by no means universally admitted, and Bishop Nicholas, elected in 1203 makes a special point of acknowledging that his election is due to the monks of Furness without mentioning any royal or popular confirmation of their choice. (Duchy of Lanc. *Cartae Miscell.* i, 30. Beck, *Annales*, 169).

An interesting document in connection with this Bishop Nicholas is an acknowledgment of the receipt from the abbot of Furness of vestments bequeathed to him by Michael, his predecessor in the see. The vestments and insignia mentioned include "a pastoral staff, a gold ring, a choir cope, an alb, an amice and sandals, an old tunic and deacon's dalmatic, a mitre and cyrothecae, a chasuble, a stole and maniple, another deacon's tunic and dalmatic, a chalice of silver gilt, two banners, a troparium, a small metal cross and two treforia." (Duchy of Lanc., *Ancient Deeds*, I, 545. Beck, *Annales*, 179).

Though with the election of that able prelate Bishop Simon in 1226 and his foundation of the cathedral of St. German, the election of bishops was transferred to the newly established chapter, that body was probably composed of the nominees of Rushen abbey, and Furness was thus generally able to secure the election of the candidate chosen by the monks.

In 1246 Furness obtained a further valuable privilege, for in that year King Harald Olaveson, in renewing the charter of his predecessors upon the throne of Mann, granted the abbey sole mining rights in the Isle of Man in the following terms:—

Harald, king of Mann and the Isles gave to the blessed Mary of Furness and to the abbot and monks the use of all his mines within his kingdom beneath and above the soil also three acres of land at Bakenaldwath to build a house as well for the reception of their men as for a repository for their minerals. (Cott. MSS. *Manx Soc.*, vol. vii, pp. 79-81; also Oliver, *Monument*, vol. II, p. 184).

This grant would be of great value to the monks, who were at that time anxious to supplement their supplies of iron ore from their local mines at Orgrave. It is interesting to note that during the excavations at Rushen abbey in 1926-27, the site of a copper founder's workshop was discovered (see W. C. Cubbon in *Proceedings of the I.O.M. Antiquarian Soc.*, vol. III, Part ii, p. 184). Subsequent rulers of Mann evidently on occasions set aside the abbey's right, for in 1292, King Edward I of England granted by charter to John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, permission to dig for lead ore in the Calf of Man for covering the eight turrets of his castle at Cruggleton. (See article "A Manx lead-mine in the 13th century," by P. G. Ralfe in *Proceedings of the I.O.M. Antiquarian Soc.*, vol. II, part iv, pp. 414-417).

The liberal grants of lands and privileges made by the Norse kings of Mann to the religious orders and the

constant drain of money expended in meeting the demands of the Cistercians had by this time depleted their treasury. This fact, however, did not deter Magnus, the last king of the Scandinavian dynasty, from continuing to foster the interests of the monks of Furness. It was in his reign and in his presence that the church of Rushen abbey was consecrated as the Church of St. Mary of Rushen by Richard, bishop of Sodor and Man. After the date of this dedication, 1257, Rushen abbey is frequently referred to in documents as "the church of St. Mary of Furness," a nomenclature which at times has led to a confusion of the abbey with its parent house of Furness abbey.

The remains of Rushen abbey were visited by our Society during the course of its excursion to the Isle of Man in 1931, on which occasion our members had the benefit of listening to an address by Mr. W. C. Cubbon, whose account of the abbey and its history is epitomised in *Transactions*, N.S., xxxii, 159-161. Readers are also referred to Mr. Cubbon's article, "The Cistercian Order and its influence in the Isle of Man" in the *Proceedings of the I.O.M. Antiq. Soc.*, vol. II, part iv, pp. 509-518, for further particulars with regard to this important religious house. Interesting details with regard to discoveries of tombs and other relics of the abbey during the excavations of 1926-27 are to be found in Mr. Cubbon's presidential address (1927) to the I.O.M. Society in the same *Proceedings*, vol. III, part ii, pp. 181-190.

In 1256, Magnus, who was evidently anxious to secure the support of England in the face of the threat to his kingdom from Scottish encroachments, paid a visit to the English king, Henry III, on which occasion he received the honour of knighthood at Henry's hand. During the course of his journey he visited Furness abbey and probably also Conishead priory, for during his visit he granted to that priory a free port in all his harbours of

Mann (J. Richardson, *History and Antiquities of Furness*, II, 23). Magnus died in 1265, and was the last king of the Isles to be buried at Rushen abbey (*Chronicon Manniae*). His last years witnessed the end of the Norse rule in the Island after the disastrous defeat of the Norsemen at Largs by the Scots in 1263.

Then, in 1266, succeeded the period of Scottish rule in Mann, though this rule did not become actually effective till the defeat and massacre of Manx patriotic party at Ronaldsway, near Castletown, in 1275. This Scottish dominance lasted until 1333, though for a time, during the Scottish wars of Edward I of England, it was replaced by English influence. Throughout this confused and troubled period of Manx history Furness abbey contrived to maintain its influence in the Island. On one occasion, however, the power of the abbots was disputed. This was during the period between 1298 and 1311, when Antony Bek, the famous bishop of Durham and patriarch of Jerusalem, held, on what authority is not quite clear, the lordship of the Isle of Man. Bek had certain affinities with Cumberland, having been at one time vicar of Brigham, and later, the temporary possessor of the honour of Penrith and the other Cumberland manors which had been granted to the Scottish king by way of compensation for the abandonment of his claims to Cumberland. Mention has been made above of the favour Bishop Bek appears to have shown to St. Bees priory in its claim against Furness abbey to the ownership of Asmunder-toftes, and about the year 1312, he evidently tried to interfere with the claim of the Furness abbots to elect the bishop of the Isles. A curious complaint and petition in Norman French by the abbey and convent of Furness explains the monks' view of the dispute:—

To our lord the king (Edward II) the abbot and convent of Furness show that as the election of the bishops of the land of Mann was given and granted to them by one Olaf formerly king of

the said land and also by the court of Rome, and the aforesaid abbot and convent thereupon in virtue of the aforesaid gifts, grants and confirmations elected divers persons who have been consecrated as bishops upon their election, as the abbot and convent will show openly by deeds and muniments when it shall please our lord the king, and having been ever since in possession of the said election until Sir Antony, formerly bishop of Durham, lord of the said land of Man by his lordship and act of violence took these rights from them. Of which they pray remedy from our lord the king and his council. Moreover whereas the said abbot and convent had the right to the churches of St. Michael and St. Maughold in the said land of Mann appropriated to them to hold for their own profit for ever and by consent of their ordainers were in full possession, then came the said Anthony, lord of the said land of Mann as he was, and wrongfully deprived them. Of which they pray of our lord the king grace and remedy, by God.

The petition is endorsed in Latin, "Let them show the documents and evidence touching each of the two petitions." (*Ancient Petitions*, Public Record Office), No. 5496. Printed in *Furness Coucher*, vol. II, part iii, pp. 694-695).

In this petition, of the result of which there does not appear to be any record, it will be noted that mention is made of the possession by Furness abbey of the appropriations of the churches of St. Michael and St. Maughold. These two valuable appropriations came to the abbey in the following manner. In 1297, Hugh Skiller, abbot of Furness, held the high office of keeper of the Isle of Man, probably for Alexander III of Scotland. Skiller was doubtless able to give powerful support to the interests of his own abbey and to bring pressure to bear upon the able Mark, who after the Scottish victory at Ronaldsway had been made bishop of the Isles by Alexander III who set aside the claim of the abbot of Rushen "elected by the clergy and people of Mann." Though he denies it in his charter, Mark was probably compelled against his will to grant the appropriations of the two churches to Furness Abbey. The charter runs as follows:—

To all faithful followers of Christ who shall see or hear these present letters, Mark by divine permission bishop of Sodor, Salvation in the Lord. Since it is a pious deed to resist contradictors by evidence of the truth and to shut the mouths of those who speak injustice, we therefore in the word of God truly protest that the appropriation of the churches of St. Michael and St. Maughold in our diocese of Mann, granted by us with the consent of all our clergy in the tenour of these present letters and confirmed and ratified, was not made under any compulsion or constraint exercised or to be exercised nor yet under fear of the said abbot, although at the time of the appropriation he held the keepership of the Isle of Man, nor from fear of any other persons, but of our own pure and free will, in honour of God and the blessed Virgin and for the good of our own soul and those of our parents and friends and especially the soul of lord Richard, our predecessor, of pious memory, who is buried in the church of the said monastery, and that (this grant) was made of our own accord, duly and totally without retention of the third part of the said churches. In witness of which matter we have set our seal to these present letters. Given in the abbey of Rushen on the morrow of the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, in the year of our Lord 1299 and the 23rd of our consecration.

(Duchy of Lanc., *Ancient Deeds*, LS, 112. Printed in Beck, *Annales*, p. 243).

The "lord Richard" to whom reference is made in the above document was the bishop who consecrated the monastic church of St. Mary of Rushen in 1257. He was bishop of Sodor and Man for 23 years, and dying on his return from a General Council held at Lyons, was buried in 1274 at Furness abbey.

A probable relic of the connection between Furness abbey and Maughold is the beautiful standing cross outside the gate of the church. This remarkable monument, described by Kermodé and Herdman in *Manks Antiquities*, pp. 118-119, was visited by our Society in 1931, when members who were present enjoyed the privilege of hearing the late Mr. P. M. C. Kermodé's explanation of its significance. For the possible meaning of its heraldic symbolism, the reader is referred to a

paper by Mr. F. Swynnerton, read to the Isle of Man Antiquarian Society in 1916 and published in that Society's *Proceedings*, vol. II, part iii, pp. 235. The paper was followed by an interesting note by Mr. P. M. C. Kermodé (*ibid.*, pp. 235-243) who expressed the opinion that the head of this beautiful cross of St. Bees sandstone dated from the later years of the 14th century. Mr. Kermodé suggested that this monument was a preaching cross set up in a place where people might congregate for the purpose of marketing. It was brought out in the discussion which followed Mr. Kermodé's paper that the spot was a likely one for a market, as the abbots of Furness exercised the mining rights, referred to above in the present article, in the Maughold neighbourhood and worked the mines in the Laxey valley. There would therefore be a certain number of the abbey's workpeople in the district who would require a market for the purchase of their food and other necessities. The possessions of Furness abbey in Michael and Maughold led, as we shall see presently, to litigation after the dissolution of the abbey.

The history of the Isle of Man during the fourteenth and early 15th centuries shows a continued assumption of authority by the monks of Furness and the papal see. The Manxmen lacked the safeguards provided in England by such statutes as those of Premunire and Provisors and were unable effectively to resist the encroachments of the monastic orders and the papacy.

Thus, in 1348 we find that William Russell, abbot of Rushen, was elected bishop and consecrated at Ostia by Bertrand bishop of Ostia by command of Pope Clement VI. As the *Chronicon Manniae* states, "he was the first bishop-elect of the Isles to be consecrated and confirmed by the apostolic see" (A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, p. 75). This Bishop William Russell, who had at one time obtained permission from the Pope to

encumber his church and see with a mortgage, subsequently paid off, to carry on the affairs of his diocese, died in 1374 at "Ramshead," possibly Rampside in Furness though Ramsey in the Isle of Man may perhaps have been thus spelt by the chronicler. (*Chronicon Manniae*, p. 121). Like Bishop Richard, a century before, he was buried in Furness abbey.

In the earlier years of the fifteenth century Furness abbey evidently began to find its possessions beyond the sea an encumbrance, for in 1420 the abbot and convent petitioned Pope Martin V for licence to exchange their unproductive property in Ireland and the Isle of Man "for others adjacent to their house and more convenient to them." The Pope acceded to this request and authorised the archbishop of York, after due enquiry, to grant the required licences. How far the monks availed themselves of this permission with regard to their Manx properties is not recorded (see *Transactions*, n.s., xli, 168). They were still able to give a certain amount of financial support to the Manx bishops, for on November 25th, 1376, John bishop of Sodor gives them a bond for £24:—

Be it known to all men by these present letters that we, John, by divine permission bishop of Sodor, are bound and by this present writing indebted to the abbot and convent of Furness in the sum of twenty-four pounds sterling, good and legal money, to be paid to the same abbot and convent at the two feasts of St. Martin immediately following in equal portions without any further delay. To the faithful settlement of which payments in the aforesaid manner we pledge ourselves, our heirs, successors and executors and all our goods effectively by these presents. Given at the feast of St. Katherine the virgin in the year of our Lord 1386 (Duchy of Lanc. *Ancient Deeds*, L. 277).

This bishop, John Donkan, had gone to Rome for consecration but had been taken prisoner and confined at Boulogne till late in 1376 when his ransom was paid;

it was perhaps the expense involved in this adventure which compelled him to become a borrower. The mention of the ceremony of his installation at St. German's cathedral is the last entry in the *Chronicon Manniae*, which, though often very meagre in its details, is of value in establishing many facts and dates in connection with the history of the relations between Furness abbey and Mann down to this period.

The authority of the spiritual barons which during the unsettled period of frequent changes of government in the Isle of Man had been without a curb to keep it within bounds was destined soon to be curtailed. In 1333, after the invasion of Sir William Montacute, the Island came under the domination of England, and although for the time there was still a constant change of rulers, Mann came at last under the settled government of the Stanleys. The second Sir John Stanley, who came to Mann in 1417, was the first to take measures to do away with the extraordinary powers exercised by these spiritual barons. He enforced the old Manx law which had fallen into abeyance that barons living out of the land should come at forty days' notice to show by what rights they held their lands or forfeit their temporalities; he did away with the right of sanctuary which the spiritual lords had misused as a means of defeating the pursuit of justice and he established the rule that no baron was to take more than £5 out of the Island on pain of forfeiture.

The abbot of Furness disdained to present himself when called on in 1418 to come to give proof of his rights, and the abbots of Bangor and Saball and the prior of St. Bees also failed to put in appearance. The abbot of Furness, however, seems to have revised his decision on a second summons, for though the other absentees forfeited their possessions into the hands of the overlord, Furness did not. Other measures, which it is unnecessary to mention in this article were taken by Sir John Stanley to

reduce the power of the spiritual barons, and from that time up to the date of the dissolution of the religious houses, Furness, although it still retained powers in the Isle of Man found these powers very much curtailed and was obliged to own the ruler of Mann as its master in temporal affairs.

The dissolution of the monastic establishments in the Isle of Man did not take place as the result of the English Act of 1539, but merely by the arbitrary action of Henry VIII, when the abbey of Rushen and other religious houses were vested in the crown. (A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, p. 93). Furness abbey which had already been dissolved in 1537 thus ended its connection with Mann. At the time of its dissolution, the abbey rental shows only the following particulars with regard to property held in the Isle of Man:

For the farms and rectories of St. Michael and St. Machold, at £13. 6s. 8d. a year, but not yet paid	£26 13 4
And for the rent of a parcel of land called Ronateswath lying between the monastery of Russhen and Casteltowne, at 12d. a year, but as yet unpaid	0 2 0
	Sum £26 15 4

The lands of St. Michael and St. Maughold subsequently became the subject of a dispute, for Richard Wodeward, yeoman of the King's Chamber, writes to the Court of Augmentations complaining that Richard Parr, priest, John Stephenson, priest, and Gibon Mack Corkeill have illegally entered into possession of lands in the two above named parishes forfeited by Furness abbey and let to the complainant at £5 a year by letters patent, under the seal of the Court of Augmentations. Gilbert Mack Corkell writes in turn to the Court alleging that " Roger (Piele), late abbot of firneys in the County of Lancaster, and the

convent of the same house by their deed indented bearing date the year of our Lord God, 1534 and sealed with their convent seal did demise and to ferm did lett to John Make Corkell, priest, and Gylbert Make Corkell, now defendant, all commodities and profits belonging or annexed to the churches of St. Michael and St. Maholde from the date of the said indenture during the natural lives of the said John and Gilbert, his brother, now defendant." There does not appear to be a record of the Court's decision in the matter. The full text of the letters is given by Mr. Owen in the *Proceedings* of the I.O.M. Antiquarian Society, vol. II, part iii, pp. 257-261.

This and other disputes over the ownership or tenancies of what were once the abbey lands are among the last relics of the power once exercised over church and state in the Isle of Man by Furness abbey. In the days of their undisputed sway, before their privileges were curtailed by the Stanleys, the abbots of Furness doubtless frequently employed their exceptional privileges in an arbitrary manner, and more in the interests of their own house than in those of the Manx people whose spiritual welfare had been in so large a degree committed to their charge. There was always a risk of the bishop, whose appointment was due so often to their influence, proving subservient to their schemes of aggrandisement. Thus, for instance, at the Diocesan Synod, held in 1291 at Kirk Braddon, under the presidency of Bishop Mark, the tithes payable by the Manx parishes were more strictly defined, and in many cases increased. A fish tithe was imposed for the first time and also a tithe upon merchants, traders, smiths and other artificers. (A. W. Moore, *Diocesan History of Sodor and Man*, p. 65). It is to be noted also that shortly afterwards the Manx people were placed under an interdict for three years, as a punishment for disobedience to this same Bishop Mark, who, as his grant of the advowsons of St. Michael and St. Maughold to Furness

shows, was a supporter of the abbey's claims. Significant too, is a complaint addressed to Pope Urban V, by John Hugh, vicar of the church of St. Lupus, Malew, that the revenues of his church, valued at £40 a year, had been retained by the abbot and monks of Furness's daughter-house, Rushen abbey, for their own use and that they left him only an allowance of six marks. Monopolies held by the monks, such as the mining rights mentioned earlier in this article must have been viewed with disfavour by patriotic Manxmen.

Despite these and other abuses of power it must not be forgotten that Furness must have brought a civilising influence to the Isle of Man and done much to preserve contact between that island and the outer world. The story of the association of Furness with Mann is a subject which offers a field for further research.