

ART. V.—*The estates of the Lanercost Canons, with some notes on the history of the Priory.* By the Rev. J. R. H. MOORMAN, D.D.

Communicated at Kendal, April 10th, 1948.

I.

LANERCOST PRIORY was founded by Robert de Vallibus about the year 1166.¹ His father, Hubert de Vallibus, had died in 1165 and the son appears to have made immediate preparations for the founding of a religious house where a community might be established to pray for the soul of his father. The charter which was drawn up at the time of the foundation has been printed in the *Monasticon*,² and also by Archdeacon Prescott,³ and has already been discussed in these *Transactions* by T. H. B. Graham.⁴

The foundation charter opens with the gift of the *landa* of Lanercost "between the Old Wall and the Irthing, and between Burth and Poltross." The first half of this sentence is perfectly clear; the canons were to have the northern bank of the Irthing up to the line of the Roman Wall.⁵ But the second half of the sentence is not so clear. "Burth" is, of course, Burtholme Beck which formed the western boundary. But where is "Poltross"? Graham naturally assumed that this was the Poltross Burn which rises on Denton Fell and joins the Irthing at Gilsland.⁶ But there are various considerations which

¹ See J. C. Dickinson, "A Note on the Foundation of Lanercost Priory," CW2 xlii 183-7.

² Dugdale, *Monasticon*, ed. Caley, Ellis and Bandinel, vi 236-7.

³ Prescott, *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal*, 419-21.

⁴ CW2 xxi 130-8 and xxii 24-43.

⁵ See map, p. 78.

⁶ CW2 xxi 130.

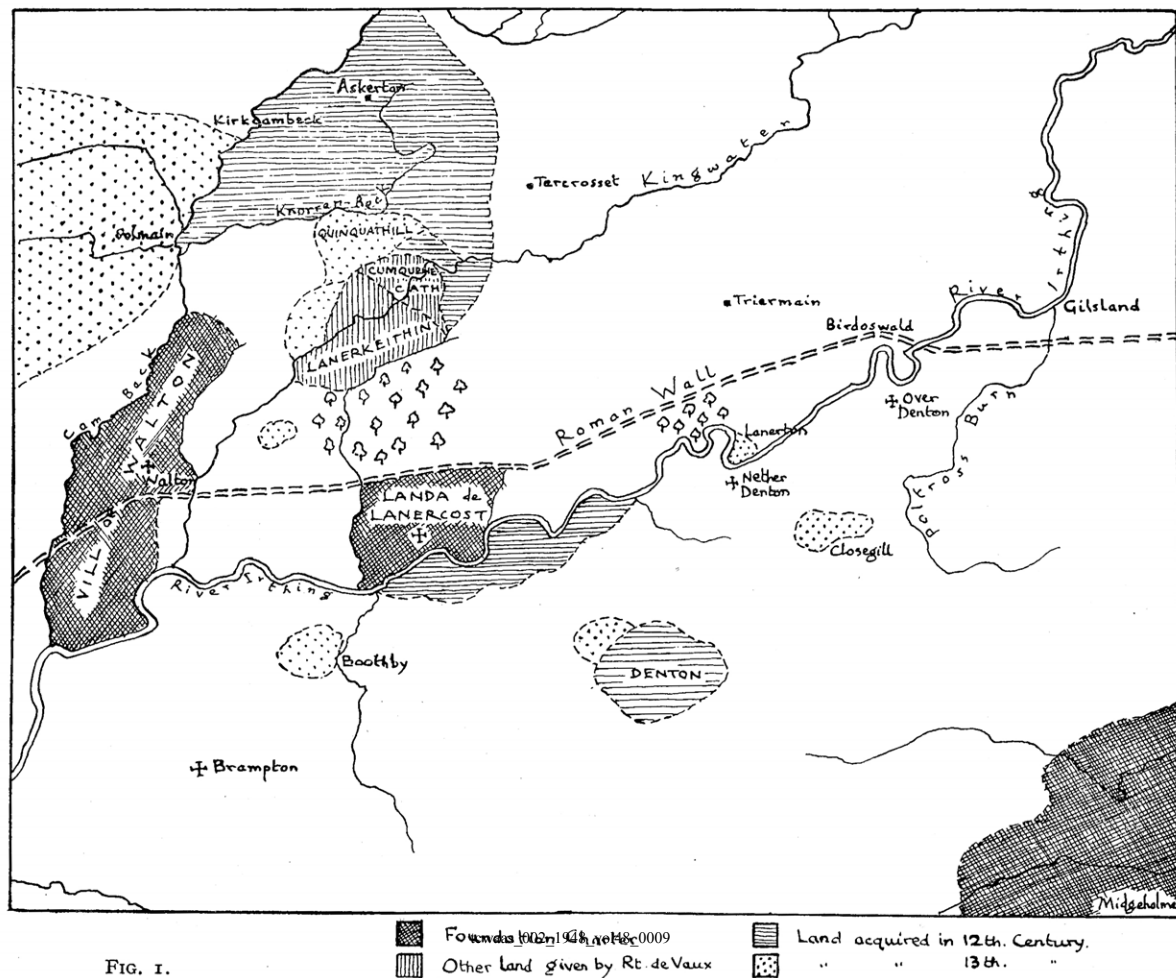


FIG. I.

make this most improbable. In the first place, by the time Gilsland is reached the Wall has crossed the Irthing and now runs close to the river on the south side. Secondly, this long strip would include the manors of Lanerton and Birdoswald which we know were not given to the canons until considerably later. Moreover, Poltross appears to have been quite a common name for a stream, for, besides the Poltross which I have mentioned, there is at least one other stream of this name mentioned in the Chartulary as flowing into Cam Beck.⁷ Finally, the middle part of this strip, if it extended so far, would consist of a rocky gorge which can hardly be described as part of a *landa*, a word which Graham translated as "lawn" but which probably meant land fit for cultivation. There seems little doubt, therefore, that the eastern boundary of the *landa de Lanercost* was not the Poltross Burn which divides Cumberland and Northumberland, but one of the becks which flow into the Irthing between Lanercost and Wallholme.⁸

The foundation charter goes on to say: "and I have also given to them the vill of Walton within these boundaries, viz. from the Old Wall along the ditch which is next to Cospatricseye as far as the Irthing and so along the Irthing to the place where Camboc flows into the Irthing, and then up the Camboc to the ditch which comes down from the Black Oak which is on the road leading to Cunquencath; and on the other side of the Black Oak as far as the ditch of Polterheved which flows into the King and along the King as far as the Wall, with common pasture round about." "Cospatricseye" is, so far as I know, a name which has altogether disappeared; so also has the Black Oak. But it is fairly easy to determine the boundaries here mentioned: the "vill of Walton"

⁷ Lanercost Chartulary MS. No. i, 19.

⁸ The most likely one is Banks Beck, which marks the end of the flat arable land. East of this point the ground rises very steeply from the river to the wall.

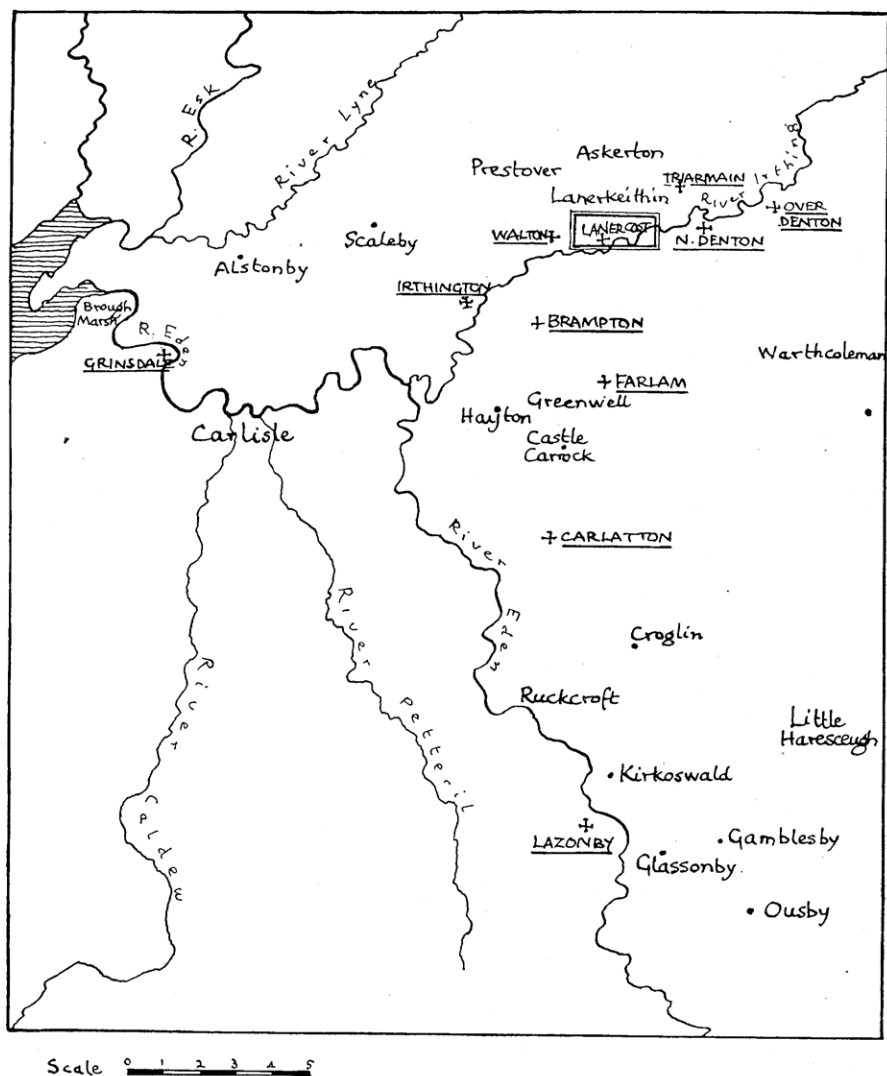


FIG. 2.

was a strip of land between the Kingwater and the Cam Beck, about a mile wide and four miles long.

Robert de Vallibus then declares that he has given to the Priory the Church of Walton with the Chapel of Treverman or Triarmain, and also the Churches of Irthington, Brampton, Carlatton and Farlam with all that appertains to them.

Walton Church was thus appropriated to the Priory at its foundation, but it was not until 1252 that a Vicarage was ordained. In that year Bishop Sylvester de Eversden stipulated that the vicar should receive the altarage⁹ and six acres of land near the church.¹⁰ This, apparently, was not altogether acceptable to the vicars, for in 1287 a new arrangement was made whereby the vicar was given the option of a regular income of twelve marks a year.¹¹ This agreement continued for a hundred years, but towards the end of the fourteenth century the canons ceased to appoint further vicars and arranged from thenceforth to serve the church themselves.¹² Walton appears to have been the only one of the churches appropriated to Lanercost which was actually served by the canons.¹³

The Chapel of Triarmain has long since disappeared. The manor belonged to a branch of the de Vaux (or de Vallibus) family, and a castle was built there of which only a fragment now remains.¹⁴ But in the Lanercost Chartulary there is an interesting document which throws considerable light on the early history of this chapel.¹⁵

⁹ The word "altarage" should mean the offerings of the people, but was often used in the Middle Ages to imply all income of a benefice other than the greater or "garb" tithes (i.e. the tithes on corn): Hartridge, *Vicarages in the Middle Ages*, 36-7.

¹⁰ Lanercost Chartulary MS, viii, 12.

¹¹ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xi, 2.

¹² Nicolson & Burn (1777) ii 482.

¹³ Except the Chapel of Triarmain; but this was not a parish church.

¹⁴ See CW2 xxvi 247-54.

¹⁵ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xv, 17; the document is not dated but probably belongs to the latter part of the twelfth century or early in the thirteenth.

The document is called "The Verdict of the Ancients touching Treverman Chapel" and runs as follows:

Gilmore, son of Gilandus, who was lord of Treverman and Torcrossec made first a chapel of wattles at Treverman and had divine service there, Bishop Edelwan giving his consent.¹⁶ Enoch, who was then Rector of Walton, [?] gave] a part of the land now called Kirkland, whence a priest and his clerk could be supported, to minister and to serve in the aforesaid chapel. And Gilmore, lord of Treverman, admitted to serve the said chapel his kinsman, Gilmore the Chaplain, who was at first given hospitality and lived on that land for a long time before the coming of Hubert de Vallibus into Cumberland. Then Daniel, a priest, succeeded Gilmore and ministered in the said chapel and had the chapel and all the pasture of Treverman as in the time of Enoch the parson. After Daniel, Estin the priest ministered there in the time of Thomas, parson of Walton, after the foundation of Lanercost. In their time all the men of Treverman had there all services in full except baptism and burial until the said Thomas gave himself up.¹⁷ And after the said Thomas had given himself up to the Canons of Lanercost, Lord Robert de Vallibus gave the church of Walton with the chapel of Treverman to the house of Lanercost which he had founded. The Prior and Convent had the chapel served sometimes by the canons and sometimes by seculars, and all the men of Treverman received all the sacraments at Lanercost, paying all tithes and oblations there and doing all other things which parishioners are wont to do for their Mother Church.

Irthington vicarage was taxed in 1224 giving the vicar the whole altarage and the glebe land together with the garb tithes of the vill of Irthington and the tithe of hay and mills throughout the whole parish, saving to the Prior and Convent yearly three eskeps of oatmeal and two of malt. This was afterwards reduced to one and a half eskeps of oatmeal.¹⁸

¹⁶ This must be Bishop Adelulf, the first Bishop of Carlisle, consecrated in 1133.

¹⁷ *Reddidit se.* Does this mean that he had surrendered his rectory in order that the Church of Walton might be appropriated to the Priory, or that Thomas himself became a canon?

¹⁸ Nicolson & Burn ii 485; Lanercost Chartulary MS. x, 8-9.

Brampton vicarage was taxed about 1220 by Hugh de Beaulieu, Bishop of Carlisle. He collated his clerk Thomas to the altarage and to all land belonging to the church.¹⁹ Farlam was not, apparently, taxed until 1251 when Bishop Sylvester de Eversden ordained that the vicar should have all the income of the church except the greater tithes, at the same time allowing the canons one acre of church land at Farlam for the purpose of building a grange.²⁰

Carlatten Church is definitely stated in the foundation charter to have been given to the canons of Lanercost and is so described in certain documents derived from it.²¹ But it is clear that for some reason or other, the church was not actually handed over, though it was eventually given to the Priory by Edward I in 1307. In spite of the foundation charter and its derivatives we find that in the letters of those most likely to know what was happening, Carlatten is not included among the churches appropriated to the Priory.²² Nor is it mentioned in a Bull of Honorius III in 1224,²³ while in the *Testa de Neville*, c. 1212, it is definitely stated to be one of the churches in the gift of the king.²⁴

A Bull of Alexander III in 1181 gives a list of the churches belonging to the Priory and includes, besides Walton, Irthington, Brampton, Carlatten, Farlam, Grinsdale and Denton, the church of Distington, near Workington, given by "Gilbertus filius Inerlonis."²⁵ Three years later a Bull of Lucius III in 1184 gives the

¹⁹ Lanercost Chartulary MS. viii, 10.

²⁰ *Ibid.* viii, 11.

²¹ A Confirmation by Roger, Archbishop of York (1154-81), a Bull of Alexander III in 1181 and a Bull of Lucius III in 1184 (Lanercost Chartulary MS. viii, 14, 18 and 19).

²² E.g. letters of Americ, Archdeacon of Carlisle, 1196-1204 (Lanercost Chartulary MS. viii, 2) and Bernard, Bishop of Carlisle (*ibid.* viii, 3).

²³ *Ibid.* viii, 20.

²⁴ *VCH Cumberland* i 420.

²⁵ Lanercost Chartulary MS. viii, 18.

list of churches as Walton, Irthington, Brampton, Carlatton, Farlam, Denton and Distington.²⁶ What happened here we do not know. Possibly the grant of the church of Distington was promised but the promise not kept. In the Bull of Honorius III in 1224 Distington is not mentioned, nor in the confirmation charter of Richard I.²⁷

After declaring the gift of the five churches, the foundation charter goes on to say that the canons were also to have the *landae* of Warthcoleman, Roswrageth and Apeltrethwayt "as Sechenent flows into Herthinburn and so towards Tindale by the bounds which Gille son of Bueth held," and common pasture of the whole moor and a winter shieling (*scalinga hiemalis*) beyond Hartleyburn.²⁸ Later documents in the Chartulary show that all this land lay in the neighbourhood of Midgeholme on the Brampton-Alston road, which may account for the fact that until 1937 Midgeholme was in the parish of Lanercost, although separated from the rest of the parish by some six miles of land belonging to Farlam and Nether Denton.

The foundation charter then gives the canons leave to pasture thirty cows anywhere in Walton Wood, twenty sows with young up to two years old, pasture for plough-oxen and free pannage for pigs either bought or reared. It also gives them certain rights of way and enough land in Brampton Wood to build barns and collect their tithes, together with permission to have a mill and a fishpond.

²⁶ *Ibid.* viii, 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.* viii, 1 and 20. Nicolson & Burn know nothing of any appropriation of Distington, which they describe as "rectorial" (ii 50).

²⁸ Here Mr Graham engaged in some unfortunate guesswork (CW2 xxi 133). Warthcoleman he attempted to identify with Solmain (which is off the road from Walton to Kirkcambeck), Roswrageth with Raghill (also near Walton) and Apeltrethwayt with Appletree on the Roman Wall. All of these places are many miles from the Tindale district and cannot possibly have had any connection with the places here mentioned in the charter.

2.

The canons, therefore, started off with three main estates—at Lanercost and at Walton and in the neighbourhood of Midgeholme. But this was by no means the whole of Robert de Vaux's benefaction, for in the remaining years of his life, from 1166 to 1195, we find records of a number of gifts towards the extension of the Priory's estates.

Away to the north-west of Walton Wood lay a district known in those days as Lanerkeithin.²⁹ The charter of Robert de Vaux which gives this to the canons specifies the boundaries as "from the Stone Cross to Burth's head, and thence as Burth goes down to the head of the *landa* towards Walton to the oak with the sign of the Cross which in our perambulation we called the Oak of S. Mary; and from that tree by the oaks signed with Crosses as far as the King and then up the King to the place where Transpoll flows into it and then up the Transpoll to the Cross near the head of the ditch (*fossatum*), and thence by the ditch to the Stone Cross."³⁰

Next to this district known as Lanerkeithin lay the vill of Cumquenecath. The charter which gives this to the canons mentions no boundaries,³¹ but it is clear from a number of references to it that it was a place of some importance; it is mentioned in the foundation charter and in at least sixteen other documents in the Chartulary.

²⁹ The name, as with most place-names, is spelt in a number of different ways in the Chartulary. Graham identified this "mysterious locality" with Lanerton, about halfway between Lanercost and Gilsland (CW2 xxi 134); a glance at the specified boundaries will show that this is quite impossible.

³⁰ Lanercost Chartulary MS. i, 6. The Stone Cross has disappeared but has left its mark in the farm known as Stonecrossrigg; Burth's head is, of course, the source of Burth Beck. I know nothing of Transpoll.

³¹ Lanercost Chartulary MS. i, 15; it speaks only of "per certas divisas." But a later charter of 1243 (vi, 25) mentions land in Cumquenecath near Hardkrist; this must be the farm now known as Hardhurst. Other places mentioned in connection with Cumquenecath are "the sike which rises under Gallowberry" (xii, 12), Langlands (xii, 19) and Garthes, which probably gave its name to the present Garthside (xii, 12, 19-21).

After comparing all these references I came to the conclusion that it must have lain at the foot of the hill which is marked on the map as "Friars' Waingate" but which is known locally as "the Whinegate". Among the various spellings of the name I found a number which called it "Cumquinkat," and I have no doubt that this means the coomb or hollow by the Whin-gate,³² and that this ancient name of Whingate was later corrupted by some antiquary into "Waingate," to which the word "Friars'" was prefixed.³³ At the foot of the "Whingate" is a bridge and until recent years there was a hamlet here, the remains of which are still visible.

Meanwhile Robert de Vaux was also enlarging the canons' territory in the Tindale area by giving to them "the waste between Hartleyburn and Black Burn from the Canons' Ditch to the Byres of Hartleyburn."³⁴ together with pasture on Tindaleside and land to build a shieling or *scalinga* beyond Hartleyburn.³⁵ He also gave them a carucate of land at Hayton.³⁶ Other gifts include the tithe of all hunting "as well in flesh as in hides and skins of foxes,"³⁷ bark throughout the whole Barony of Gilsland for the upkeep of the tannery,³⁸ and a whole family, Geoffrey Pitch and his wife and children.³⁹ To

³² There is great variety of spelling this word, but many of the variations are due to misreading Cs and Ts. The spelling Cumqueneiach (in i, 15) is not so impossible as it looks: "Quene" is clearly "Whin" (for QU or QW was often put for WH in medieval script), and "iath" or "yat" is a dialect form of "gate." On the north side of the coomb was Whingatehill or Quinquathill, on which see below, p. 96.

³³ As far as can be traced the name "Friar Waingate" first appears in the Elizabethan Survey of Gilsland in 1588 (Hutchinson, *Cumberland* i 100); this was just over fifty years after the dissolution of the Priory.

³⁴ I.e. Byers Pike: Lanercost Chartulary MS. i, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.* i, 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.* i, 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.* i, 2-3.

³⁸ *Ibid.* i, 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.* i, 17. Other charters recording gifts of serfs are vi, 13 (charter of Anselm de Neuby for Henry son of Ledmer and his family) and xiv, 8 (charter of W. de Yreby for Walter son of Simon de Gamelsby and his family, 1268).

these might be added a gift by Robert's wife, Ada Engayne, who had previously been married to Simon de Morville and had some property in Kirkoswald parish. She gave to the canons, on behalf of herself and her husband and for the souls of her parents and of her former husband, the district known as Little Haresceugh, an area bounded by the Melmerby-Croglin road on the west, the Raven Beck on the north, Black Fell on the east and, on the south, by a line from Hartside Height through Swarthgill and Cannerheugh to the road again.⁴⁰

Meanwhile two other members of the de Vaux family added considerably to the canons' estates. Ralph de Vaux, a brother of the founder, gave a fairly large tract of land described in the charter as "the two Askertons."⁴¹ This was undoubtedly a large estate, but the canons do not seem to have held it for very long, for in 1256 the Prior quitclaimed the manor of Great Askerton, which became the property of Thomas de Multon.⁴² The charter of Ralph de Vaux gives the boundaries of the land but, apart from Kingwater, Knorren and Cam Beck, the names (Poltross, Troutbeck, the Black Hills and the two 'Wiliavels) appear to have died out altogether.⁴³ The other member of the de Vaux family who gave land at this time to the Priory was Eustace, probably a cousin of the founder, who held some property at Castle Carrock; he gave a carucate (i.e. 64 acres) of land there at Greenwell on the river Gelt.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* ii, 11-12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* i, 19.

⁴² CW2 xxii 35-6; see also the feet of fines for Cumberland No. 97 (CW2 vii 226).

⁴³ Lord William Howard's Survey of 1603 mentions the tenements of Willyavye in the manor of Askerton (T. H. B. Graham, *The Barony of Gilsland* 7).

⁴⁴ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ii, 8 and xiii, 5-6. The canons of Carlisle appear to have had some claim to this plot of land, as one charter (ix, 3) records a final agreement between the Prior and Convent of Carlisle and the Prior and Convent of Lanercost concerning newly cultivated lands in Grenewell in the parish of Hayton, 1259.

The example set by the de Vaux family appears to have been followed by a number of local landowners, for gifts of land came in at this time from several quarters. A few miles to the south of Lanercost lies Farlam, which then belonged to the family of de Windsor (or de Wyndesover).⁴⁵ The owner of the Farlam estates at the time of the foundation of Lanercost Priory was Walter de Windsor, and there is some reason to suppose that the appropriation of Farlam church to the canons was as much his gift as that of Robert de Vaux.⁴⁶ He also gave a plot of land on the west side of Farlam church⁴⁷ and a considerably larger tract on the east in the direction of Closegill.⁴⁸

To the north-east of Farlam are the two parishes of Over and Nether Denton.⁴⁹ Most of the land here belonged either to the ancient family of Bueth, who were lords of the barony of Gilsland before the coming of Hubert de Vaux, or to the family of Asketil, though the two families were intermarried.⁵⁰ From these two families the canons of Lanercost acquired not only considerable land in these parishes but also the appropriation of Over Denton church and a share in the church of Nether Denton. Over Denton church, together with "the hermitage which Leysing held," was given to the Priory by David son of Werri and Robert son of Asketil, the gift being confirmed by Robert de Vaux.⁵¹ Nether Denton church had a more eventful history.⁵² It was given by Robert son of Bueth to S. Mary's Abbey at York for the use of the cell of Wetheral; but the canons of Lanercost claimed that this

⁴⁵ See CW2 xix 92-5.

⁴⁶ Prescott, *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal* 231 footnote.

⁴⁷ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ii, 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* ii, 20.

⁴⁹ Over Denton is now part of the parish of Gilsland.

⁵⁰ Prescott, *Wetherhal* 195 footnote.

⁵¹ Lanercost Chartulary MS. i, 4 and iii, 13.

⁵² On this see Nicolson & Burn ii 509-10; Prescott, *Wetherhal* 74-5 and 213-5; CW2 xxvi 294-7.

church had already been given to them by Robert's father, known as Buethbarn. The difficulty was solved by a compromise whereby the church was divided equally between the two houses, Wetheral and Lanercost; but this was not the end of the matter, for in the thirteenth century the appropriation of the church was disputed, and the matter was only settled by the patronage being transferred to the Bishop of Carlisle, while each of the monasteries drew a small annual pension of two and a half marks. Robert son of Bueth also gave a carucate of land at Denton and land to maintain a light burning before the altar of S. Cuthbert in the Prior's chapel,⁵³ while he joined with his brother-in-law, Robert son of Asketil, in granting the canons the right to collect wood and in the gift of 32 acres in Carthutelan.⁵⁴ Robert son of Asketil gave a toft and a croft in Denton which Werricus the priest had held, and certain rights on Denton Common.⁵⁵

Thus, within a few years of their foundation, the Canons of Lanercost had considerably extended their estates. But gifts continued to come in, both of land and of churches. Mention has already been made of the vill of Cumquinkat at the foot of what is now known as the Waingate, between Lanercost and Askerton. A charter of the latter years of the twelfth century records the gift of half a carucate (32 acres) of land in "the vill of Cumquencath" by a man called "Geoffrey son of Gerard," and the following charter associates the gift with a certain Walter Benn or Benny. There seems no doubt that this is Walter Baynin who held land also at Birdoswald and Askerton, and made a number of grants both to Lanercost and to Wetheral.⁵⁶ Even more

⁵³ It is interesting to note that the Prior had his own chapel at this early date.

⁵⁴ Lanercost Chartulary MS. iii, 3-6 and 10. I have not been able to identify this place: Carnetley is possible.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* iii, 16 and vii, 19.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* iv, 19-20, vi, 28 and vii, 2. Cf. Prescott, *Wetherhal* 223 footnote.

important was a very substantial gift of land in this district of Cumquinkat by a man called Israel the Chamberlain, who was in the household of Robert de Vaux and one of the witnesses to the foundation charter.⁵⁷

Meanwhile in the Irthing valley the canons were strengthening their position. Their founder had given them the land on the north bank of the river as far as the Roman Wall; now, about 1190, a second Robert de Vaux, nephew of the founder, made them a considerable grant of land on the south bank, from the canons' fishpond upstream probably as far as Low Nook.⁵⁸ The same benefactor also gave them land in Geltsdale and at Hayton, and bequeathed his body to be buried in the Priory Church at Lanercost.⁵⁹

About the same time as this the canons increased their income by several gifts from the de Morville family. Ada, wife of the founder and widow of Simon de Morville, seems to have inspired her son, Hugh de Morville, with a desire to support the new foundation. Not only did he give them certain rights in Burgh Marsh, including the salt-pits and a net in the Eden, but he also appropriated to them the churches of Lazonby and Grinsdale.⁶⁰ In the case of Lazonby it appears that the Abbot of Kelso had some claim on it, though he was persuaded to relinquish his claim on the canons of Lanercost agreeing to pay him two bezants of gold annually at Rothbury Fair.⁶¹ But how far the Priory actually entered into possession of the church of Lazonby is doubtful, for a later charter of 1272 records that on the resignation of "Hugh de Moleton, custos," the church was appropriated to the use of the

⁵⁷ Lanercost Chartulary iv, 21-2.

⁵⁸ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ii, 2. The eastern boundary is given as the point where Polterternan flows into the Irthing; Polterternan is not a name which is known today, but it probably represents Carling Gill: it is mentioned again in vii, 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* ii, 3-6.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* ii, 14, 16 and 17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* xiii, 25-6; the latter is dated 1202.

Prior.⁶² Two questions arise: who was Hugh de Multon, and what exactly is meant by *custos*? In answer to the first of these, Hugh de Multon was descended both from the de Morvilles and the de Vaux; his father's mother was Ada, daughter of the Hugh de Morville who originally gave this church, and his mother was Matilda de Vaux, a granddaughter of the second Robert, nephew of the founder.⁶³ As for the word *custos*, I imagine that, since Lazonby was some distance from Lanercost, the canons had found it more profitable to put the church out to farm and that Hugh de Multon, as *custos*, paid the canons a yearly rent.

The church of S. Kentigern, Grinsdale, is now in the parish of Kirkandrews-on-Eden. There seems no doubt that this was given by Hugh de Morville to the Priory,⁶⁴ though later charters ascribe the gift to Richard de Neuton and William le Sor,⁶⁵ who together shared the manor of Grinsdale.⁶⁶ In addition to the church the canons acquired several parcels of land in the parish.⁶⁷

One other gift which can definitely be assigned to the twelfth century was made by Peter de Tilliol, lord of the manor of Scaleby, who died in 1183.⁶⁸ His son, Simon, confirmed to the canons land which his father had given at Brightenflat and Hallflat.⁶⁹

3.

Thus by the year 1200 the canons of Lanercost had acquired, close to their Priory, the valley of the Irthing on both sides of the river, the fertile land in the Kingwater

⁶² *Ibid.* ix, 14.

⁶³ Prescott, *Wetherhal* 106-7 and 306-7; see also CW2 xxviii 157-66.

⁶⁴ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ii, 17.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* v, 4-5. In the Breviate of the Lanercost Chartulary published by Mackenzie Walcott in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 1866, the gift is ascribed to Richard de Denton, but there is no doubt that this should be Richard de Neuton.

⁶⁶ J. Denton, *Cumberland* 81.

⁶⁸ CW2 xxi 140.

⁶⁷ Lanercost Chartulary MS. v, 7-15.

⁶⁹ Lanercost Chartulary MS. vi, 4.

valley at Cumquenekat and the neighbouring district of Lanerkeithin, the vill of Walton and, at any rate for a time, the Askerton estates. Further afield they had the Tindale estates near Midgeholme and land at Brampton, Hayton, Farlam, Castle Carrock, Denton, Scaleby, Grinsdale and Haresceugh. In addition they drew tithes of the mill at Little Corby and tithes of hunting in the Barony of Gilsland, had rights of pasture at Kirkcambeck and on Burgh marsh and in the collection of wood and bark. Furthermore they were the impropiators of a number of churches—Walton with its outlying chapel at Triarmain, Irthington, Brampton, Farlam, Grinsdale, Lazonby (which appears to have been farmed out), Over Denton and a half share in Nether Denton.

With this they were able to start the building of their church and conventual buildings. As far as can be gathered from the appearance of the work and the styles of architecture employed, the canons began by putting up their cloister and then built the choir and transepts, leaving the nave to be built at a slightly later date. The lower part of the south wall of the nave, which is built largely of Roman stones from the Wall, is obviously older than the rest of the nave, and was built to form the north wall of the cloister. The Prior clearly had his own lodging and his own private chapel.⁷⁰

Only one Prior is known by name before 1200, a man called Symon who is mentioned in the confirmatory letters of Popes Alexander III and Lucius III in 1181 and 1184.⁷¹ There is no evidence whatever to help in estimating the number of canons, but it is unlikely that there were more than a dozen. The Augustinian houses varied considerably, the smaller ones having four or five members and the largest about fifty;⁷² Lanercost was never a very

⁷⁰ See above, p. 89.

⁷¹ Prescott, *Wetherhal* 220 footnote.

⁷² Moorman, *Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century*, 406-7.

large or important house. Of the first generation of canons three are known by name—Nicholas, Elias and Simon de Werye.⁷³ The last of these was probably a member of a local family of this name, one of whom, Thomas, was vicar of Brampton,⁸⁴ while two sisters, Theophania and Margaret, gave land at Closegill to the canons about 1278.⁷⁵ Mr Dickinson has shown reason for supposing that the first canons may have come to Lanercost from Pentney in Norfolk,⁷⁶ but no doubt local men were soon added to their number. It is interesting to note that one of the witnesses to a charter of about 1200 and concerned with Nether Denton church was Master R. de Karliolo, canon of Lanercost. It is certainly surprising to find a man with the designation “magister” as a member of so small and remote a house as Lanercost at so early a date.⁷⁷

4.

During the early part of the thirteenth century the de Vaux family continued to support the Priory. Mention has already been made of Robert de Vaux junior, a nephew of the founder, who gave the canons the south bank of the river Irthing at Lanercost. Now, soon after 1200 we find his brother Roland giving lands near Warthcoleman “with two essarts enclosed with a ditch and a hedge,”⁷⁸ while he appears also to have given land at Triarmain, though the document which records this gift is not included in the Chartulary.⁷⁹ A few years later Roland’s son, Alexander

⁷³ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xiii, 10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* xiii, 292-3; cf. *Northumberland Assize Rolls* pp. 298, 305.

⁷⁶ CW2 xlii 187.

⁷⁷ Prescott, *Wetherhal* 215. The only other learned man connected with the Priory was Henry de Burgh, Prior c. 1310-5, who was probably responsible for the Lanercost interpolations into the so-called *Lanercost Chronicle*: A. G. Little, *Franciscan Papers, Lists and Documents*, p. 36.

⁷⁸ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ii, 21.

⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.* iv, 6 (a charter of Hubert de Vaux for land at Triarmain which his uncle, Roland de Vaux, had given for the support of a chaplain and clerk to serve the chapel there).

de Vaux, who appears to have lived at Triarmain Castle, gave to the Priory "the commoning of turbaries" (or permission to cut peat) on the Triarmain estate, and also pasture for cattle there and on the Tindale estates at Warthcoleman and Roswrageth.⁸⁰ After the death of Alexander de Vaux his son, Ralph, confirmed the grants made by his father and grandfather.⁸¹

About the same time we find some negotiations between the canons of Lanercost and the de Multon family. Matilda, wife of Thomas de Multon, was a daughter of Hubert de Vaux and wished to assist the monastery with which her family had been so long and so closely connected. She therefore persuaded her husband to make certain grants to the canons, one of land at Warthcoleman and one of land at Prestover in the parish of Irthington.⁸² What exactly happened after this is not quite clear, but it looks very much as if Thomas de Multon repented of his generosity and brought an action against the canons. The cause was heard in 1255 in the presence of Lord H. de Bacon, justice, when an agreement was reached "concerning certain differences and the perambulation made by twelve lawful men."⁸³ This, however, did not end the dispute, for five years later de Multon arrived at Lanercost in force and seized the Priory, which he held "per vim laicalem" for more than a year.⁸⁴ After his death in 1271 his widow was able to make compensation to the canons for her husband's misdeeds, and bestowed upon them a number of benefactions, some of which were of considerable importance. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the gift of a spring of water "which rises in a remote part of her land towards Crechok which

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* ii, 22 and ix, 5 (both dated 1263).

⁸¹ *Ibid.* ix, 18-19.

⁸² *Ibid.* ix, 9 and x, 6. Thomas de Multon is described as Lord of Gilsland; he died in 1271 (Prescott, *Wetherhal* 107 footnote).

⁸³ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ix, 12; cf. *VCH Cumberland* ii 155.

⁸⁴ *Royal and Historical Letters, Henry III*, ii p. 167.

Laurence de Bankis had held near Craghyrst⁸⁵ so that the canons can bring water from it to their house at Lanercost by underground channel.”⁸⁶ Whether the canons ever took advantage of this benefaction and actually had pipes laid is very doubtful; possibly the Scottish invasions prevented this being done, but it is interesting to know that such a development was contemplated.⁸⁷ Matilda also confirmed the gift of Prestover which she and her husband had made. The bounds are given, and though some of the place-names are no longer in use, it is fairly clear that this was a considerable tract of land between Hethersgill and the Cam Beck, in the neighbourhood of Solmain.⁸⁸ In addition to this she gave land further east between Cam Beck and Cnaveron (Knorren), common pasture at Brampton and Buethby (Boothby), the tithe of hay in Northmoor⁸⁹ and a stone quarry.⁹⁰ All of these gifts were made between 1271 and her death in 1295, the year before the Priory was burnt by the Scots.

Throughout the thirteenth century the canons gradually increased their estates both in the immediate neighbourhood of the Priory and further afield. A charter of William de Rodis, about 1215, gave them twenty acres of land in Lanrequeythill or Lanerkeithin, that district to the north-west of Walton Wood, a part of which had been given to the Priory by Robert de Vaux himself.⁹¹ About fifty years later a man known as “Alexander, son of Roger, son of Baldwin” gave seven acres “between the Wall and the King by way of Walton Wood.”⁹² An

⁸⁵ I imagine that this is what is now known as Craighill near the Banks.

⁸⁶ Lanercost Chartulary MS. ix, 17.

⁸⁷ The present water-supply to Lanercost vicarage and the Abbey farm comes from a tank on Pike Hill, not far from Craighill, but the water is pumped up there from the valley.

⁸⁸ Lanercost Chartulary MS. x, 7.

⁸⁹ Northmoor appears to have been the rough land north of Kirkcambeck.

⁹⁰ Lanercost Chartulary MS. x, 10, 11 and 18; xi, 6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* vii, 4 and cf. vii, 7; see also p. 85 above.

⁹² *Ibid.* vi, 24 and xii, 11.

earlier charter, which probably dates from about 1200, records a quitclaim of Alice, daughter of Henry the Chaplain, for land at Walton called Cumheverin and Smithlands.⁹³

About the middle of the thirteenth century the canons acquired more land in the district known as Cumquenkat. A charter of about 1240 records a gift by Roger, son of Poer, of sixteen acres in Cumquencath to Gilbert Faber on his marriage to Roger's daughter Matilda; their son Robert married a girl called Juliana, the daughter of William, son of Iggeram: and she eventually gave the land to the Priory, in 1263.⁹⁴ Above Cumquenkat, on the ridge between the Kingwater and the Knorren Beck, lay the district known as Quinquathill (or Whingate-hill), a third part of which was given by William de More and Agnes his wife in 1271. Agnes (who also goes by the name of Agnes Loveless) appears to have given her share only on condition that the Priory should pay her an annuity during the time of her widowhood.⁹⁵ This was a common arrangement in medieval times; "monasteries great and small found it easy to get ready money by gambling in life insurance," as Professor Hamilton Thompson puts it.⁹⁶ Some of these insurances gave the right to live actually within the monastery, but many were in the form of pensions or annuities.

Moving further to the east we come to the ancient manor of Torcrossoc, or Tercrosset as it is now called. By the middle of the thirteenth century this was owned by Ronald de Richmond and his wife Isabella de Corby.⁹⁷ The canons do not seem ever to have acquired any of the lands belonging to this manor, but an agreement was made

⁹³ *Ibid.* vii, 6; Cumheverin has disappeared, but there is still a farm named Smithlands in Walton parish.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 18-21.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 13-14.

⁹⁶ *The English Clergy and their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages*, 174.

⁹⁷ CW2 xxii 33.

between them and the owners of it, whereby the boundaries of the canons' estates in Cumquenekat and the two Askertons were carefully drawn, so that there could be no encroaching upon the Tercrosset lands.⁹⁸ A little further to the east the canons were strengthening their position by acquiring certain rights of pasturing at Triarmain.⁹⁹

South of the river Irthing the Priory continued to extend its land in the parishes of Over and Nether Denton. Robert, son of Asketin de Denton, had three sons, Asketin, Robert and John, each of whom gave land to the Priory; the canons thus acquired estates at Closegill and Carutelaw, at Pyrihon and Hulvirhurst.¹⁰⁰ Across the river from Nether Denton lay the manor of Lanerton, five acres of which were given to the Priory by the younger Asketin.¹⁰¹ In the Farlam district Solomon, son of David, and Bernard, son of Ratmer, gave some land in what was known as "Little Farlam" near to the "royal road" (*via regia*) which ran from Carlisle to Appleby.¹⁰² Solomon also gave four and a half acres of land near Hallbank,¹⁰³ and Walter de Wyndesore gave two acres at Severig.¹⁰⁴ About the middle of the thirteenth century Robert de Karlaton gave some land in Little Farlam,¹⁰⁵ while Adam, son of Hermerus, gave "the land of Norsehon" in the same district, and a few years later his daughter, Christiana, gave five acres at a place called Biggarth.¹⁰⁶ At the same time Alan de Talkan gave some land near Hallbankgate (Hulverbanckeyate) and a plot in Talkin near the "Via Regia," where the canons

⁹⁸ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xii, 22.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* x, 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* iii, 7-8, 11 and 14.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* iii, 12 and 18.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* v, 18; the charter was afterwards confirmed by Walter de Wyndesore (*Ibid.* iv, 11). For the "Via Regia" see CW2 xxii 240.

¹⁰³ Lanercost Chartulary MS. vi, 19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* iv, 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* vi, 6-8 (cf. Prescott, *Wetherhal*, 105 footnote).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* vii, 11 and xiii, 14.

could build a barn to collect their tithes.¹⁰⁷ The same benefactor also gave five acres at Castle Carrock.¹⁰⁸

South of Castle Carrock, at the foot of the hills which form the northern tip of the Pennine Range, lie the parishes which are now included in the Rural Deanery of Kirkoswald. The canons of Lanercost already owned some land in this district, given to them by Ada, the wife of Robert de Vaux the founder.¹⁰⁹ During the thirteenth century they made considerable additions to their estates in this part of the county. Soon after 1200 William, son of Elias de Crogelin, gave them five acres at Croglin "close to Terra Templi."¹¹⁰ About thirty years later Eda, daughter of Michael de Dale, gave another five acres in the parish of Ainstable near Ruckcroft.¹¹¹ Meanwhile Adam Salsarius had given a messuage and a toft at Kirkoswald.¹¹² Again a little further to the south lay the villages of Glassonby and Gamblesby, now in the parish of Addingham. A charter of the middle of the thirteenth century records a gift of pasturage here by William de Irebi, which was renewed in 1273 by Robert Bruce "the Competitor" (who had married a daughter of William de Irebi), and by John de Seton and Eustace de Balliol.¹¹³ Finally, south of Gamblesby lay the parish of Ousby, where the canons acquired land partly from William, Richard and Odo de Ulvesby and partly from Adam and Ivo de Crakehoue; the chartulary also records a gift of half a mark annual rent, paid by Eudo de Skyrwith towards the fabric of the church at Lanercost.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* vi, 16-17. The tithes would presumably be those belonging to Farlam church, which was appropriated to the Priory.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* vi, 18.

¹⁰⁹ See above, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ Lanercost Chartulary MS. vi, 21.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* iv, 9-10.

¹¹² *Ibid.* v, 27 and vi, 1. On Adam Salsarius see a long note by Prescott, *Wetherhal* 257-9.

¹¹³ Lanercost Chartulary MS. vii, 9 and xiv, 4-6.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* vii, 20-24, ix, 10 and xiv, 9-12.

In the west of the county, the canons acquired land during the thirteenth century at three places. At Grinsdale, where they already owned the church, they received, soon after 1200, a toft and a croft, the gift of William le Sor junior.¹¹⁵ At Alstonby, six miles north of Carlisle, they were given fourteen acres by William, son of Astin,¹¹⁶ while at Carlisle itself they began to acquire a little urban or suburban property by the gift of two tofts "without the gate of Bocharthus," given by Richard, son of Trute of Brampton, and the gift of land "in vico Francorum" by John of Croglin.¹¹⁷ About 1240 a certain Walter de Pykering gave a rent of 12d. "in my house next to the castle ditch" at Carlisle,¹¹⁸ and John de Buethby, chaplain, gave certain lands in the city in Fishergate (*via piscatorum*) "to provide two candles at S. Mary's altar at the elevation of Christ's body in the Mass of our Lady."¹¹⁹ In 1287 another citizen of Carlisle, Gilbert de Grenesdale, gave a rent of one shilling a year from land "in via Francorum" and the house formerly occupied by William the chaplain, adjoining that of Michael de Haverington.¹²⁰ About the same time as this, two properties were acquired in Newcastle upon Tyne: one was a house called Haregarius, bequeathed to the canons by a certain Thomas Brune, burgess of the city, together with a rent of 4s. for property near the church of S. Andrew in the lane leading towards the Friars Minor;¹²¹ the other was a yearly rent of 4s. for a house in the lane called "Bretheschere," given by Gilbert, late servant of Gilbert de Galewith.¹²²

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* v, 15.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* vi, 10-12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* xii, 1.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* xv, 2.

¹²² *Ibid.* xv, 3. The witnesses to both these charters include Thomas de Karliol, Mayor of Newcastle; there were three men of this name to hold that office, the first in 1258, the second in 1260, 1264, 1272 and 1278, the third in 1313 (AA4 xviii 1-4).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* iv, 24-5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* vi, 14.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* x, 19.

5.

Thus the thirteenth century was, for the canons of Lanercost, a time of considerable expansion. Their estates, which were already fairly extensive in 1200, increased steadily during the following years; yet we know very little of the life of the community during these years. The nave of the church appears to have been built by about 1220, but from that time onwards very little building was done. The Priory, though well-endowed, was never rich and was, therefore, never able to pull down and rebuild, as was done at some of the more affluent monasteries.

Up to about 1260 events seem to have moved fairly peacefully at Lanercost; but from that date, for nearly a century, the quiet life of the house was much disturbed, and by the time things settled down again the canons had lost much of their prosperity, and the Priory remained, to the end, a small, impoverished house.

In 1259 a dispute arose between the Prior and Convent of Lanercost and Master Ralph de Tyllevill, rector of Kirkcambeck, about the tithes of Fulwood; after two days' discussion it ended in a division being made between the parishes of Lanercost and Kirkcambeck.¹²³ In the following year occurred the unlawful seizure of the Priory by Thomas de Multon, of which mention has already been made.¹²⁴

Then, in 1279, was passed the Statute of Mortmain which, by forbidding further grants of land to the religious houses, struck a heavy blow at them. Lanercost suffered like every other place, and very few additions were made after this date. In the following year Edward I paid his first visit to Lanercost, accompanied by Queen Eleanor; and though he presented the canons with a silk cloth, the expenses of his stay must have cost them a large sum

¹²³ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xv, 18.

¹²⁴ P. 94 above.

which they could ill afford.¹²⁵ The reason for the king's visit to the North also boded ill to all those living in the Border Country, since it meant war with Scotland and the turning of this quiet countryside into a battlefield.

Sixteen years later the blow fell. The Scots overran Cumberland and Northumberland and several religious houses, including Lanercost, suffered. A local poet wrote:

"Corbrigge is a toun, thei brent it when thei cam:
Tuo hous of religioun Laynercoste and Hexham,
Thei chaced the chanons out, ther godes bare away,
And robbed all about; the bestis tok to pray."¹²⁶

At Lanercost the church was spared, but the cloister was burnt and with it the conventual buildings of the canons. If indeed the "chanons" were "chaced out," they must have come back to a sorry sight. But no sooner had they repaired the damage than William Wallace arrived, in 1297, and burnt the place down a second time.¹²⁷ Edward I visited the Priory again in 1300, on his way to the siege of Caerlaverock,¹²⁸ but it was not until the autumn of 1306 that he made it his headquarters. He arrived at Lanercost at Michaelmas and remained in the district until Easter; he was not always at the Priory, for one or two documents of this period are dated at Kirkcambek,¹²⁹ but the king was a sick man and probably did not get very far afield.

As far as the canons were concerned this long sojourn of the Court at Lanercost was grievous indeed, and the

¹²⁵ *V.C.H. Cumberland*. ii 157.

¹²⁶ Raine, *Priory of Hexham* i, p. lxxxii.

¹²⁷ *Chron. Hemingburgh* ii 102.

¹²⁸ On this occasion Edward sent 7s. for an offering at the High Altar (*Liber Quotid. Contrarotulatoris Garderobae*, p. 40). Shortly afterwards, in 1304, the king gave the canons some land in Carlisle, perhaps to compensate them for any expenses incurred during his stay in Lanercost (Lanercost Chartulary MS. xi, 9). He may also have given them the statue of their patron, S. Mary Magdalene, which still adorns the west front of the priory church (see Prior and Gardner, *An Account of Medieval Figure Sculpture in England*, 323-4).

¹²⁹ Cf. *Cal. Close Rolls, Edward I*, 1302-6, 489, 490; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edward I*, 1301-7, 500, 501, 543.

house was much impoverished as a result of it. So, early in 1307, they begged the king "having regard to the reduced state of their house and the damages they have suffered by the king and his attendants" to give them the church of Haltwhistle, which then belonged to the Abbot of Aberbrothock and, being worth some £60 a year, was a very valuable possession.¹³⁰ The abbot naturally objected, but the king was anxious to do something for the canons of Lanercost, and gave them, instead, the churches of Carlatton and Mitford. Carlatton, as we have already seen,¹³¹ was included in the foundation charter as one of the gifts of Robert de Vaux about 1166 but, for some reason or other, the canons had never entered into possession. It was now formally given to them by the king on 17 March 1307 "in consideration of the burning of the houses and the plundering of the goods of the said Priory by the Scots, and also of the long stay which we have recently made there while detained by bodily infirmity, the Priory being in consequence greatly impoverished and brought low."¹³² Together with Carlatton was included the gift of the church of Mitford in Northumberland, which the canons finally acquired in September. A charter of Anthony Bek, Bishop of Durham, describes the Priory of Lanercost as being in a lamentable state through the depredations of the Scots, whose many invasions had reduced the church to dust and ashes. A vicarage was ordained here by the Archbishop of York in 1311, the Priory accepting responsibility for a previous agreement with the Abbey of Newminster about the payment of tithes from the grange of Keylawe in that parish.¹³³

But the sufferings of the canons of Lanercost were by

¹³⁰ *Cal. of Documents relating to Scotland* ii 503, 508.

¹³¹ See above, p. 83.

¹³² Lanercost Chartulary MS. xii, 2. The canons entered into possession in September 1308, Robert de London being then rector (*ibid.* xii, 4).

¹³³ *Ibid.* xv, 12-13; *Chartulary of Newminster* (Surtees Society) 43.

no means over yet. In 1311, at the moment when their fortunes appeared to have taken a turn for the better, Scottish troops under the leadership of Robert Bruce poured over the Border again, laying waste much land, killing many men and stealing much cattle. Bruce himself came to Lanercost with his army in August of this year, and stayed there for three days "imprisoning many of the canons and doing endless damage."¹³⁴ Even this was not the end, for in 1346 King David II of Scotland came over the Border and ransacked the church at Lanercost before going on to Hexham—where the priory was destroyed.¹³⁵

The half-century, from 1296 to 1346, was therefore a period of great tribulation for the canons of Lanercost. Up till then the house had prospered, and in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291 we find the Priory rated at £74. 12. 6.¹³⁶ By 1318 the temporalities had fallen to nil.¹³⁷ The three Scottish invasions (1296, 1297 and 1311) and the long stay of Edward I and his court in 1306-7 had together impoverished the house beyond all hope of recovery. Yet for a time the monastery continued to attract new men. During the time when John de Halton was Bishop of Carlisle (1292-1323) seven men were ordained—mostly, apparently, local men—Nicholas de Brampton, Nicholas de Lanercost, John de Bewcastle, William de Walby, etc.¹³⁸ Even in the troubled years of the first half of the fourteenth century ordinations continue—William de Gysburn, Alan de Leek and William de Punzunby in 1332, Adam de Penrith in 1339, Thomas de Hexham in 1341 and Richard Thirnewal and Thomas Tentebury in 1347.¹³⁹ But after this the affairs of the monastery seem to have become very much

¹³⁴ *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Stevenson, 218.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 346.

¹³⁶ *Taxatio Nicolai* 320.

¹³⁷ *Regist. J. de Halton* ii 189.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* i 24, 25, 107, 272, 276, 306, 314; ii 25, 30, III.

¹³⁹ Carlisle Registers: Kyrkeby ff. 238, 397, 412, 419, 498.

confused. Richard de Ridale, who had been appointed Prior in 1355, seems to have found the place unbearable and took himself off to "alia loca dicto prioratui remota et distancia," so that in November 1360 the Bishop of Carlisle had to write to Martin de Brampton, one of the canons, giving him full custody of the Priory during the absence of the Prior.¹⁴⁰ Nor was the Prior the only one to desert the place, for somewhere about this time one of the canons, William Homet, had run away, though he afterwards applied to the Pope for permission to return.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, in spite of the confusion, new members appear to have joined the community, for the episcopal registers record the ordinations of the following canons: Thomas de Hextildesham in 1366, William de Hextildesham in 1367, Robert de Braken in 1367, William de Lanercost in 1376 and William del Wall in 1377.¹⁴² But did they stay any length of time there? Apparently not, for in 1379 there appear to have been no more than five canons—Peter Frost (Prior), Thomas Prest, Richard Felton, John Forth and Robert Estwake.¹⁴³ Of those recently ordained there is now no trace! Seven years later the Prior was taken prisoner by the Scots, and set at ransom at a fixed sum of money and fourscore quarters of corn; unfortunately the difficulty of conveying the corn to Scotland without loss prolonged the Prior's imprisonment.¹⁴⁴ Early in the fifteenth century the poverty of the house was such that the canons were obliged to make application to the Archbishop of York for "Letters of Quest" to enable them to beg for alms from the faithful throughout the Northern Province.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: Welton f. 73. Richard de Ridale was still away in April 1361, when Thomas Roke was presented to the vicarage of Farlam by John, sub-prior of Lanercost, and the convent (*ibid.* f. 75).

¹⁴¹ *Calendar of Papal Letters* iii 470.

¹⁴² Carlisle Registers: Appleby ff. 268-70, 277-9.

¹⁴³ *VCH. Cumberland* ii 161 footnote (from *Exch. Cler. Subs. Bdle. 60, no. 1*); cf. *Traditio* (1944) p. 200.

¹⁴⁴ *VCH Cumberland* ii 158.

¹⁴⁵ Raine, *Priory of Hexham* i, pp. xciv-xcvi.

Of the history of the Priory during the fifteenth century very little is known. The latest date in the Chartulary is 1364, a charter of Lord Ralph de Dacre for remission of putura by his foresters.¹⁴⁶ After that date it is very difficult to trace the history of the house. The number of canons probably remained very low, and those who lived there were hard put to it to make both ends meet. It is not altogether surprising that two out of the very few references to the canons of Lanercost in the fifteenth century are concerned with attempts to augment their incomes. In 1455 Pope Calixtus III confirmed a dispensation given by Nicholas V to John Messemby, prior of the Augustinian monastery of S. Mary Magdalene at Lanercost, to hold *in commendam*, "on account of the income of the priorship being so much reduced by floods and frequent invasions of the Scots," any benefice to the value of £40.¹⁴⁷ Ten years later William Barow, a canon of Lanercost, received a dispensation to hold for life "any benefice wont to be held by secular clerks, including a chantry, free chapel or hospital."¹⁴⁸

During this period it is probable that a good deal of the land which the canons had amassed in earlier years was sold, for at the time of the Dissolution Lanercost was regarded as a very poor house, its income being less than £100 a year.¹⁴⁹ Yet it seems to have been held in some esteem in the district, for we know of at least two bequests to the canons in the early part of the sixteenth century. In 1509 Hugh Dacre, priest, left to the Priory a bedspread ("my best lectisternium vulgariter a Counterpoynt,")¹⁵⁰ and in 1522 Thomas Strangeways, Kt., willed "that the Prior of Lannarcost and the Convente of the same house shall ryng for my wife's saull, as they have done, unto

¹⁴⁶ Lanercost Chartulary MS. xv, 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Cal. Papal Letters* xi 15.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* xii 412.

¹⁴⁹ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, x 516; cf. *Valor Ecclesiasticus* v 277-81.

¹⁵⁰ *North Country Wills* (Surtees Soc.) ii 83; for Hugh Dacre see CW2 xi 101.

Martynmes next commyng, and the said Prior to have
iiii li. as my wif will was."¹⁵¹

The end came soon after this. Dr Layton and Dr Legh visited the Priory in 1536 and found the house much impoverished and two of the canons guilty of immorality.¹⁵² It is difficult to ascertain what the Priory was worth. According to these visitors the rent was 200 marks (£133. 6s. 8d.), but how much of this was allocated to the Prior and how much to the Convent is not stated. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* is notoriously inaccurate, and the only figures which it gives appear to refer to the income of the Prior only; the income of the Priory church and the eight appropriated churches is reckoned at £51. 8s. 2d., while the temporals amount to £28. 10s. 7d.¹⁵³ This would appear to be about two-thirds of the total income of the house and would make the Prior comparatively affluent while the canons were poor. That the Prior was fairly prosperous is suggested by the fact that in 1486, when the Bishop of Carlisle was riding to Jarrow, the Prior of Lanercost supplied the escort.¹⁵⁴ But it is very difficult to know what the actual value of any religious house was in the sixteenth century.

Shortly after the visitation of the northern monasteries the "demonstration" known as the Pilgrimage of Grace took place. It would appear that the canons of Lanercost must have taken some part in this, for in February 1537 the king wrote to the Duke of Norfolk, complaining that the disturbance had been encouraged by

¹⁵¹ *Testamenta Eboracensia* v 156. For some fourteenth-century bequests see *Testamenta Karholensia* 21, 50, 102, 138.

¹⁵² *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, x 140. The guilty canons were Edward Ulwalde and Thomas Rideley (*VCH Cumberland* ii 160 footnote 2).

¹⁵³ *Valor Ecclesiasticus* v 277. At Carlisle the income is all entered as belonging to the Prior, but at Cartmel the respective incomes of both Prior and Convent are recorded. An estimate made in 1537 gives the total figure for Lanercost as £85. 6s. 11d. (*Dugdale-Caley Monasticon* vi 238).

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, *Rose Castle* 164.

the monks and canons of a number of northern houses, including Lanercost, and ordering them to be "tyed up," i.e. hanged, "without further delay or ceremony,"¹⁵⁵ This order, however, was perhaps not carried out, for when the house was finally dissolved the Prior, John Robyson, was instituted as rector of Aikton.

The final disposal of the Lanercost estates, after the dissolution of the Priory, is outside the scope of this essay. There appears to have been some dispute between William, Lord Dacre, and Sir William Penyson, and the Books of the Court of Augmentations for 1537-8 actually record Sir William Penyson as in possession of "Lanrecost Abbey" together with Walton Rectory, the Rectory of Grinsdale and certain tithes.¹⁵⁶ But in the end the Priory and its surrounding land was acquired by the Dacres, who lived there until early in the eighteenth century. The original "landa de Lanercost" of the foundation charter, the fertile land in the valley of the Irthing which formed the original nucleus of the canons' estates, is now the property of the Earl of Carlisle.

¹⁵⁵ *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, xii pt. i 226-7.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* xiii pt. i 588; xiv pt. i 604.