



Hurley.

(No. II.)

By Rev. F. T. Wethered, M.A.

[ERRATUM.—On page 28 of the Journal for July, 1891, instead of (line 23) “because their wood aforesaid parties,” (line 31) read “on the ground that you so wickedly ravage and destroy their forest without their (knowledge) and consent : wherefore I charge you and ‘super feoda vestra’ enjoin and warn you not to hinder them henceforth from their water or in their forest outside your hedges without the approval of the Prior or his Monks to take aught : albeit whatever for your own houses’ dilapidations may be needful for you, and for your fences, I enjoin that you have what is needful for you with the approval of the Prior and his Monks.”]



“Osmund the Good, Count of Seez in Normandy, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and Lord High Chancellor of England, and at last Bishop of Sarum *consecrated* (sic) this Church of Hurley A.D. 1086, and died December 4th, 1099, in the reign of William Rufus.” So runs the legend on a metal plate, of modern date, fastened on to the outer wall of the old Refectory facing the Church. But there is no authority at all for fixing A.D. 1086 as the precise year in which the Church was consecrated—or, rather, dedicated. The Charter which I have lately had transcribed from the original in Westminster Abbey, makes it quite certain that the foundation of the Benedictine Monastery at Hurley, the endowment of the Church (by Tithes), and the Dedication of it to the Blessed Virgin Mary took place on one and the self same day : but, in Domesday, which was completed in 1086 A.D., no mention whatever occurs of the existence of any monastery here ; so that it is (as already pointed out by me in my last paper) quite sufficiently apparent that the dedication of Hurley Church did not take place until *after* Domesday was finished ; and whereas William the Conqueror, who had originally given the Manor to Geoffrey de Mandeville, died on September 9th, 1087, the date of the Hurley Charter was on some day *either* in 1086 (*after* Domesday was complete), or in 1087 on some day previous to the death of King William I. There is nothing at all unusual in no date being affixed to ancient Charters.

And, then, another plate on the Refectory wall has the following inscription : " I, Maud, daughter of King Henry, and Governess of the English, do give and grant to Gaufréd de Mandeville, for his service, and to his heirs after him hereditarily, the Earldom of Essex ; and that he have the third penny of the Sheriff's Court, issuing out of all pleas as an Earl ought to receive from his country in all things. This is the antientist charter that Mr. Camden ever saw." Geoffrey II. here referred to was grandson to Geoffrey I. He was standard bearer of England in the times of the Empress Maud and of King Stephen : he had a sister (Beatrice) and married Roesia, sister to Aubrey de Vere, first Earl of Oxford. This Geoffrey (II)* and his wife granted part of the revenues of their chaplain, &c., to Hurley ; and William, their son, confirmed his father's gifts. Geoffrey (II) died at the siege of Burwell. On a stone mural slab (also affixed to the South wall of the Refectory) is cut the following : " The priory of St. Mary's, Hurley, founded in the reign of William the Conqueror, by Geoffrey de Mandeville and his wife Leceline A.D. 1086, a cell to Westminster." It will at once be evident that these inscriptions refer to two different members of the Mandeville family. It is uncertain as to the exact Magneville, Manneville or Mandeville in Normandy from which the founder of our Monastery took his name. It is popularly reported that, having greatly assisted the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings, he received the Manor of Hurley from his Royal Patron in consideration of his chivalry ; but the surmise that he fought at all at the battle of 1066 and received his manors for his prowess rests on no authority. It is true that a French Rhyme of the 14th century, apparently made from the Domesday Survey, begins a list of the Norman Conquerors by

Maundeville et Daundeville

Ownfravigle et Downfrevile,

but this gives no real authority for the legend referred to. De Lisle puts down the family as from Manneville near Trevières, but it is thought on competent authority to be just as likely that the Manneville near S. Valéry en Caux, just off the road to Dieppe, is the place of our founder's family origin, since that district contains several Domesday names. Geoffrey, the elder, signs a fair amount of Charters, A.D. 1119 being probably the latest date of the signatures. He seems to have come in for a large share of lands which the Conqueror had annexed from the vanquished Saxons, viz., some forty manors in Essex ; some twenty-six in Suffolk ; some nineteen

* Geoffrey de M. (II) was the founder of Walden Abbey.

in Hertfordshire ; nine in Cambridgeshire ; seven in Northamptonshire, and the same number in Middlesex ; five in Berkshire ; three in Oxfordshire ; two in Warwickshire, and three in Surrey : he was, moreover, made Constable of the Tower of London by the Conqueror. In fact, our Benefactor was in clover. So that altogether his bounty to Hurley, as a feudal lord, is much discounted, when we come to total up his newly-acquired possessions. We must gather from the Hurley Charter that Geoffrey had a sincere and lasting affection for the memory of his first wife Athelais (*"matris filiorum meorum jam defunctæ"*). *He buried her in cloisters at Westminster Abbey, and mentions his intention of being buried there himself. Leceline, his second wife, was evidently a lady of much piety : and, as the Charter relates to us, it was at her instance that her husband's gifts to Hurley were made. His gifts were conscience money. I am obliged to those antiquarians who have been good enough to assist me and to offer criticisms in connection with the Charter and its translation, which I now print. It has been done into English with great care and research from the abbreviated Latin, and the endeavour to make a faithful translation has led to much interesting enquiry on all sides. If the edition which I offer for the Journal is not accurate, it is certainly not owing to want of criticism from those competent to offer it ; and I have no doubt as to the correctness of the results as they now appear.

The original manuscript from which the translation of the Hurley Charter was made (from a transcript taken last February) is in the Muniment Tower of Westminster Abbey, and it is to the courtesy of the Dean that I am indebted for permission to transcribe it.

The Hurley Charter also appears in the Walden Cartulary, which was very clearly copied for Abbot Pentelow in A.D. 1387. It contains seven other Charters to do with Hurley. Dugdale used the Walden M.S. for his *Monasticon* (ed. 1682, vol. I., p. 363 ; ed. 1846, vol. III., p. 433) when he printed his edition of Geoffrey the elder's Charter (and very badly he has done it, too).

Some philological difficulties are said to exist in the text of the Charter, but they do not appear to me as very great when they come to be investigated thoroughly. In the Westminster original, for example, words occur reciting our founder's careful thought of a yearly dole for the Hurley Convent (from the Isle of Ely and

* See Cotton MS., Faustina III., 281 *verso*. [Grant to Eye] "*Ego Geoffridus de Magnâ villâ pro animâ meâ et pro animâ Athelays conjugis meâ in Claustro Sancti Petri sepultæ, qui etiam juxta eam sepeliendus sum, &c.*"

from the hamlet of Mose, in Essex) as follows, viz.: "His enim addidi adhuc in insulâ de Hely, unam piscariam quæ reddit unum millearium et dimidium siccarum anguillarum et unum presentum anguillarum quadraginta videlicet grossas anguillas, &c." To this reading it has been objected that whereas Dugdale has printed "*sticarum* anguillarum," and whereas the expression "stiche anguillarum" occurs frequently in Doomsday, this word ("*sticarum*") is probably the correct rendering. A "stiche" of eels consisted of a lot of 25 (Halliwell's Dictionary). However, the Walden M.S. in the Harleian collection has "siccarum" plainly enough, so that Dugdale must have misread the word. If it be objected that "*dried* eels" are remarkable as articles for food, the answer is that undoubtedly the common eel and the lamprey are often kept dried or smoked for winter consumption even now-a-days. Block, in his Natural History of Fishes, speaks of smoked eels; and Couch, in his work on British Fishes, speaks of dried conger-eels prepared in France. In the transcript which I have secured from the Westminster Manuscript—and which has been most carefully executed and certified by Messrs. Hardy and Page, Record Agents—the words are unquestionably "siccarum anguillarum" and "siccorum allecium." But the words which have provoked more criticism than any others in our Foundation Charter, from a philological point of view, are those which immediately follow the "*dried* eels!" viz., "et unum presentum anguillarum quadraginta videlicet grossas anguillas." It is objected that the word "presentum" is nonsense, and that in the Walden M.S. no "et" occurs before "unum"; and moreover that in the last-named M.S. "valet" occurs instead of "videlicet"; and so it has been suggested—whereas Dugdale, as a fact, reads "pesentum" (although both the Walden and Westminster M.S.S. have "presentum"), he having only seen the Walden M.S. (without the "et," and with "valet" instead of "videlicet")—that this historian imagined that the clause was nothing more than a "note," and that the word in the original might have been *pesūt* (?), and so connected it with *pensa pensum* (cf. the French "*peser*,"—or how the *pondus* becomes *poids*, and then drops) and so means a weight—equalling one hundredweight but varying as to pounds (ours being as high as 112 avoirdupois), but which perhaps may be found as low as 72, seldom the exact 100, &c., and 40 large eels—which would weigh probably (it is argued) 2½ lbs. on the average—was to be the regulation—equivalent, i.e., "*valet*." However, for my own part, I have quite come to the conclusion that "et presentum . . . videlicet . . ." is the correct reading, and I can see no real difficulty at all in translat-

ing the Westminster M.S. When one bears in mind the extraordinary Latin which appears in these old Charters, such as (e.g.) "warantizabimus," for "we will warrant,"—or "in Parco meo" as the equivalent for "in my Park,"—it is easy to imagine a notary of the period resigning himself to "et presentum, &c." as a not unsuitable expression for "and a present, &c." These "40 eels, that is to say (*videlicet*), fat eels" were no doubt kept in a fish stew as dainty bits for red-letter days—Foundation Day and the rest—in the Hurley Monastery. The definition of "presentum," as given by Ducange, is "*præstationis species quæ muneris nomine.*" (Ducange's definition of "stiche," be it noted, is "*certus numerus anguillarum Anglis estike,*" and he quotes the Hurley Charter; but he is wrong in giving this as an illustration, I am convinced). In the Cottonian Library is a Charter purporting to be by William the Conqueror himself, which confirms the charter of the elder Geoffrey to Hurley. This William the Conqueror Charter has "et presentum" in the eely passage, which is, of course, shocking nonsense.

A few words on the Church fabric and Monastery. The Monastic Square, now known as "Paradise," still exists on the north side of the Church; and, so far as the chief portion of its northern side is concerned, the old buildings are still in situ with traces of fresco in them. These constitute the Refectory, which, though turned into stables in later times, is substantially intact. Along the north wall of the Church the ends of sawn-off beams, flush with the old Saxon wall, which used to form the rafters of the roof of the corridor along which the Prior walked into S. Mary's through the grand old north door still existing (though now blocked up), carry us back to the days of old. Fragments of Norman work in chalk are still dug up from time to time around the Church: and a really beautiful chalk Norman capital (with the dint of an old flint axe cut in it) is in the Vicarage hall, discovered probably when the Church was undergoing restoration in 1852. The extreme west end is of considerably later date than the Saxon portion of the Church; and it is interesting to notice in the fine old western doorway how the axe is superseded by the chisel in the execution of the arches—some part of the work being done with one and some with the other. This doorway and the still more beautiful west window are carved out of fine Caen freestone. The southern door, in chalk, is a beautiful piece of later Norman work, of the twelfth century. The rough north wall of indigenous chalk and flint has been, happily, left untouched by the restorer. Its rude masonry, with four

rounded Saxon windows let in at a considerable height from the ground, is clearly Saxon throughout the greater part of its length. The Western end is probably of a later (Norman) period. "We strenuously maintain," says a writer* in 1838, "that this part, at least, is older than that era (the Norman), and, though rude, as genuine a specimen of Saxon building as any existing Church hitherto so denominated,"—such, for example, as at Worth, Sussex, or at Bradford-on-Avon. The lead-covered cross now surmounting the bell turret is said to date from the time of Edward the Confessor, and probably stood originally in the centre of a burial yard. Appended is a translation of the original Westminster M.S. :—

**The Dedication and Endowment of S. Mary's Church
and Foundation of the Benedictine Monastery at
Hurley, Berks, in the Reign of William the
Conqueror (A.D. 1066—1087).**

A TRANSLATION OF THE ORIGINAL CHARTER IN THE CUSTODY OF
THE DEAN AND CHAPTER OF WESTMINSTER.



ET the Faithful and Sons of the Catholic Holy Mother Church, now and hereafter, know—That I, Geoffrey of Mandeville, have granted, and of my bounty have given, to God and to S. Peter and to the Church of Westminster, as also to S. Mary of Hurley for the salvation and redemption of my own soul, and for that of my wife Leceline, at whose counsel by the Providence of Divine Grace I began this good work; and for the soul of Athalais my first wife and the mother, now deceased, of my children; as also for that of all my heirs and successors—

The said Church of S. Mary of Hurley in Berkshire, together with the whole of the aforesaid vill of Hurley, and with all the surrounding wood appertaining to the said vill, without any share or portion being taken by any man, whether a resident in the said Parish or holding any property therein, except the land of Ædric the bailiff, and except the lands of the ceorls at Little Waltham, which I have kept in my own hands for providing me with entertainment [when there].

* See *Gentleman's Magazine*, March, 1838, p. 262.

I have granted this, I say, and have given it in perpetuity to the said Church of Hurley together with all my demesne, free and without hindrance, whether in fields, or woods, meads, meadows, pastures, mills, waters, fisheries, fishing-rights, and with all their appurtenances,—that is to say—the Church of Waltham together with a hide and a half of land which belongs to it, and the soke of the chapel of Remenham.† And [I have granted it] together with all other things with tythes and property in live and dead stock without partition or division, together with all customs and liberties of old belonging thereto, as free and as clear of disturbance or exaction from all men as when my Lord the King gave and granted the same to me.

I have also, together with the above-named, given to the aforesaid Church, on the day on which I caused it to be Dedicated by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, in the presence of many other men and persons of great authority, the land of Edward of Watcombe‡ as Endowment free and without hindrance, with all belonging to the same.

On that day, moreover, the aforesaid venerable Bishop, of his Pontifical authority, with the assistance of the persons of high influence and dignity who were with him, confirmed all my grants which I made of my free will to the said holy place for the eternal salvation of my own soul and for that of all my heirs,—that is to say, in all the manors which at that time were in my demesne, the third part of the tythe of all my corn and two-thirds of the tythe of all the stock both live and dead in all my manors, without partition ; and the whole of the tythe of my pannages, in hogs and payments, without partition ; and the whole tythe of cheese, without partition ; and the whole tythe of flax and wool, without partition ; and the whole tythe of fowls, horses, and calves ; and of orchards and vineyards without partition ; and the whole tythe of all my other goods from whatsoever the tythe ought rightly and justly to be given to God.

In addition forsooth [to the above] I have, in every manor of all my demesne, given to my aforesaid Church of Hurley one ceorl who shall hold eight acres of land, free and clear from all custom, and in my Park one hog-run with land for the swine-herd.

† Remenham is in Berkshire, next parish but one west of Hurley.

‡ A farm called Watcombe still exists at Fawley, Berks.

To these moreover I have further added one fishery in the Isle§ of Ely which supplies a thousand and a half of dried eels, and a present of forty eels, that is to say fat eels. And in the vill which is called Mose|| I have granted, besides the above, three thousand dried herrings.

Also Thorald, my steward, has granted to the said Church and has confirmed the same, placing his right hand upon the Altar, together with the offering of his son Ralph, two-thirds of the tythe of all his corn in Ockendon,¶ and the whole tythe of all his live and dead stock, without partition; and in Bordesden* the whole tythe of all his corn and of all his stock, without partition.

Ædric, my bailiff, has given the whole tythe of his corn and of all his live and dead stock in the same place, without partition.

Now I, for the completion of this my so great bounty and for the sole support of the Convent of monks continually serving God in the said Church, have under the influence of Divine Grace besought my Lord King William that, in order to preserve the everlasting integrity and endurance of the place, all these things might be confirmed, to the honour of God and for the salvation of my own soul and of that of all my heirs and successors; and that that place—a place which was also distinguished by the guardianship of royalty—should always be held by me as the chief one having a call upon my protection and defence, and as my highest honour, and be free and clear from disquietude at the hands of all men.

And so, on the same day on which the Church was Dedicated, by the said Bishop and by Gilbert, Abbot of Westminster, together with many other men and persons of high authority, I caused that all who should violate or reduce these my alms should be excommunicated, that their habitation should ever be with the accursed Judas, the betrayer of our Lord, and that they should go down alive into the pit of eternal damnation together with Dathan and Korah, under the

§ Chippenham, in Cambridgeshire, although not *in* the Isle of Ely, is very near it. It belonged to Geoffrey de M. and had a fishery assessed at 1,500 eels! In Domesday the Inquisitors say of this fishery “De piscariâ 1500 anguillarum in totis valentiis valet £20: quando recepit £16: tempore R.E. £12.”

|| Mose; a hamlet in Beaumont Parish in Essex; 10 miles south-east of Colchester. Mose was formerly a separate and distinct parish, but was consolidated with Beaumont in 1678. Domesday says that the King gave the Manor of Mose to Geoffrey de M. “quando remansit Londoniæ.”

¶ Domesday gives Ockendon (in Essex) as held by Geoffrey de M., and “Tuoldus de eo.”

* Bordesden Manor is in Essex.

eternal malediction [of God] unless they shall have repented and made due satisfaction.

Wherefore I call to witness, by the terrible judgment of God and by His Almighty power in heaven and earth, all my sons, that is to say my heirs and all my successors, that they themselves do not, nor suffer to be done, any violation of this my gift ; moreover that they increase and stablish the same, so that God may increase and stablish their days, and their life in everlasting happiness ; and that they may on account of these my alms take part with me in the heavenly Rest.

Witnesses—

The said Bishop Osmund—Gilbert, Abbot of Westminster—The lady Leceline my wife—William of Mandeville—Richard of Mandeville—Hugh Marshall—Thorald of Ockendon, the steward—Geoffrey of Ockendon—Walter Marshall—Ascelin, the chaplain—Agamund, the parson of Ockendon—Godwin of Turrock, the chaplain—Ralph of Hairun—Arnulf of Grenford—Robert, his nephew—Engeram, the cup-bearer—Richer, knight—Roger Blond—Wymund of Blangey—Ædric, the bailiff—Ælfric, the builder—together with many other men and persons of authority and dignity, who were present at Hurley on that day but whose names it is not necessary to record.

After counsel, then, taken with honest men, three brief Charters recording this my Gift and Foundation have been made ; one I have deposited at Westminster, another at the Church at Hurley, and a third for myself and my heirs who will succeed me ; [and this I have done] in order to secure the everlasting integrity and permanence of the place.



In A.D. 1258 Godfrey, Prior of Hurley, in order to avoid a quarrel with Absolom, Abbot of Walden, surrendered a large portion of the Tythes belonging to Hurley Monastery ("tam majores quam minores") in exchange for the Church and Patronage of Streatley (Harleian M.S. No. 369, *Walden Series of Hurley Charters*). And, in the Patent Roll of 36 Henry VIII. (Part 12, Memb. 30), we find Henry VIII. making over to Leonard Chamberlayne all his Rectories and Churches "de Hurley Waltham et Stretley cum eorum juribus et pertinenciis universis in dicto Comitatu nostro Berk dicto nuper Prioratui de Hurley" &c.