

## PREFACE

THE "Greenwell Deeds" here calendared are part of the collection formerly belonging to the late Rev. William Greenwell of Durham. °

Before his time, most of them, as earlier references indicate, had been in the possession of the Spearmans of Thornley in Kelloe; while some would appear to have belonged to Canon Raine. After Dr. Greenwell's death, the collection was sold by auction at Sotheby's in London and was acquired by Mr. Parker Brewis of Newcastle upon Tyne, who generously presented to our Public Library those relating to the district.

Along with the collection there came seven notebooks (marked A, B, C, D<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>, E—F, and K—L: see note preceding Index) in which Dr. Greenwell had either merely listed or noted the charters, or, as was more frequently the case, had transcribed them in full or in part. Some deeds, however (those now marked "M"), he had not listed or noted in any way. In his transcripts he had as a rule extended the many abbreviations of the mediaeval scribes. But of course he kept to the original tongues of the deeds; moreover, the transcripts were not arranged in any order, there was only the single copy of them, and as already said, some of the deeds had been altogether omitted. It was considered, therefore, that the utility of these charters would be greatly increased if an English calendar of them were made. The preparation of this calendar, which involved collation of the original documents with Dr. Greenwell's transcripts, and a

preliminary transcription of the deeds omitted or merely listed, was entrusted to Mr. Joseph Walton, sub-librarian to the Public Library. In his record of these old methods of conducting business and of arranging the transfer or inheritance of property, he has revealed some picturesque phases of mediaeval life; and the results of his labours, with the full index he has added of persons and places, should prove of much interest and help to those who study local history and customs. The documents range from about A.D. 1137 to A.D. 1823, and, as will be seen from the calendar itself and also from Dr. A. Hamilton Thompson's introduction, they contain a great deal that is of value concerning feudal relations, ecclesiastical influence, the cultivation of moor or waste, and the enclosure of land, as well as something about early mining agreements. To Dr. A. Hamilton Thompson thanks are due for this introduction as well as for his constant readiness to assist in palæographical or historical obscurities. The Town Clerk of Newcastle upon Tyne, Mr. A. M. Oliver, has been good enough to read the proof of the earlier portion of the calendar while it was going through the press, and has kindly made a number of clarifying suggestions. The plates of seals, at the end of the volume, are from photographs by Mr. C. H. Hunter Blair, who has also prepared the keys to the plates. It was an appropriate suggestion of his that the Public Libraries Committee and the Society of Antiquaries should publish this Calendar jointly.

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