

THE CATHEDRAL, DIOCESE, AND MONASTERIES OF WORCESTER IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY.¹

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IN offering the following remarks on the early history of the Cathedral and Diocese of Worcester, I must premise that I do it with much diffidence, and under correction. The case of Worcester differs largely from that of Peterborough: in the latter all the materials for history, which are known to exist, are few in number and need only a little criticism to make them still fewer. The materials for Worcester history, not only are abundant, but have from the earliest times received a scholarlike and critical treatment. In the first place Anglo-Saxon Worcester can boast a series of illustrious and holy bishops whose biographies contain much that throws incidental light on the subject I have proposed to myself: such are S. Egwin, Dunstan, Oswald, and Wulfstan. Again, by the fact that the see of Worcester was frequently held in conjunction with York, it gains illustration from the York biographies, especially in the lives of Aldulf, Wulfstan the Reprobate, and Elfric.

In the second place, Worcester was a school of English history, strongly characterised by sound English feeling. To this we owe probably one existing copy of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle,² and certainly the invaluable *Chronicon ex Chronicis* of Florence. In the third place, the charters of Worcester are exceedingly full, are very little impaired by forgeries, and were codified soon after the Conquest by Hemming. In the last place, the history of Worcester has been handled by Thomas and Green in a sound critical way.

The kingdom of the Hwiccas at the time of its conversion contained Worcestershire and Gloucestershire with the corner

¹ Communicated to the Historical Section at the Annual Meeting of the Institute in Worcester, July, 1862.

² The MS. Tiberius B. iv. is called by Josselin, *Chronicon Wigorniae*:—it con-

tains many Mercian notices of the 8th century, and is in one hand down to 1016: possibly it owes its origin to Bishop Wereferth.

of Somersetshire that is north of the Avon. Worcester called itself metropolis.³ A great part of this territory had been conquered from the Britons by the West Saxon Ceawlin, and formed a portion of Wessex from 577 till the date of the extension of Mercia under Penda.⁴ The battle of A.D. 645, which drove Cenwealh into exile, probably fixed the position of this district in Mercia.

The origin of the family which governed it as tributary to the king of Mercia is unknown to us. Judging, however, from the recorded names, we feel inclined to connect it with the royal houses of Northumbria. The names of Eanfrith, Eabba, Oswald, Osric, Oslaf, Osred, are common to both.⁵ Eaba, the wife of Ethelwealh of Sussex, had been baptised in the court of her brothers Eanferth and Eanhere of the Hwiccas :⁶—Eaba, the Abbess of Coldingham, uterine sister of Oswald of Northumbria, had a brother Eanferth, who as son of Ethelfrith and Acha belongs to the pedigrees of both Bernicia and Deira. Without contending that the persons designated by these names are identical, the juxtaposition of them, in connexion with what I am going to say, points to a family relation at least. This is however all that we know of Eanfrith and Eanhere, that they were Christians before the year 661, in which Ethelwealh of Sussex was baptised.

The next king of the Hwiccas was Osric. He is mentioned by Bede as king in 690, and the earliest mention of him in a charter is in 676. It may be worth while to devote a few moments to a consideration of where he came from. Everyone who has read the life of S. Wilfrid of Ripon must have been puzzled by the way in which his devoted friend Alchfrith, the son of Oswiu, and sharer with his father of the Northumbrian throne, disappears from history. We know that he at least was closely connected with Mercia : Kyneburh, the daughter of Penda, was his wife : Peada, the first Christian king of the Middle Angles, and son of Penda, the brother of his wife, the husband of his sister, was brought to Christianity chiefly, as Bede tells us, by Alchfrith's persuasion.

³ Metropolis, C.D. 91.

Bath remained a part of Mercia until it was granted by William Rufus to John of Tours, Bishop of Wells, who removed his See to Bath in 1088 or 1089.

⁵ Eanfrith, Bede, iv. 13, and iii. 1; Eabba, Bede, iv. 13; Oswald, Mon. Angl. i. 541; Osric, Bede, iv. 23; Oslaf, C.D. 34; Osred, C.D. 90; Chr. S. ad 617.

⁶ Bede, iv. 13.

Ethelred, another son of Penda, also brother-in-law of Alchfrith, and the most faithful protector of Wilfrid, was king of Mercia from 675 to 704. It is unnecessary for me to enter here into the minutiae of the politics of Northumbria, but it seems pretty plain that the family of Oswiu was a very divided one, and that one part of it was closely allied with Mercia. From Bede we learn incidentally, that Alchfrith rebelled against his father⁷: there is no mention of his death: but on the death of Oswiu, his son Ecgrith succeeded him, nor does the name of Alchfrith appear again in Bede. Osric, however, who succeeded to the Northumbrian throne in 718, as the last of the house of Oswiu, if we may believe Simeon of Durham, was the son of Alchfrith. According to the recorded tradition of the Abbey of Gloucester,⁸ the king of Northumbria, who died in 729, was identical with the king of the Hwiccas who founded Gloucester and Bath. The Gloucester register adds that he had a brother Oswald, the founder of Pershore,⁹ who governed Worcestershire, and a sister Cyneburh, who was the first Abbess of Gloucester; and that the brothers were put in authority by king Ethelred.¹

Putting all these together, I conclude that Alchfrith having forfeited his share in Oswiu's kingdom by rebellion, had fled or sent his children to the protection of his brother-in-law Ethelred, one of whose first acts must have been the elevation of Osric. I have dwelt thus on the probable origin of Osric, not only because he was the founder of the See of Worcester, but because his Northumbrian parentage, if it is a fact, throws some light on the history of the Church in this kingdom.

He was not, however, the converter of Hwiccia; the country had been Christianised as early as 661 under Eanfrith and Eanhere: the people probably contained a fair sprinkling of native British Christians; Worcester itself has been claimed as one of the seven suffragan sees of Caerleon,

⁷ Bede, H. E. iii. 14.

⁸ Mon. Angl. i. 542. Osric died 7 Id. Maii, 729, buried at Gloucester before the altar of S. Petronilla. Chron. Gloucester, Domitian A. 8.

⁹ Oswald, founder of Pershore, for secular clerks, Leland, Coll. i. 283, v. i.; refounded by Beornoth, tem. Cenulf; destroyed by Aelfhere cir. 976; refounded by Ethelward Wada and by Oddo in 983, under Oswald, Abp., and Folcbright,

Abbot.

¹ Kyneburh has a grant at Bradley from Ethelbald, about 723, C.D. 79: her successors at Gloucester were, according to the Annals of Winchelcomb and Gloucester in the Cotton MSS. (Mon. Angl. i. 541):

Eadburh, wife of Wulfhere, king of Mercia—succ. 710.

Eafa, for 33 years—succ. 735-768.

and as a Roman city may have had a bishop as early as Gloucester, which is mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth as an episcopal city. More certain it is that Augustine passed through the Hwiccas on his way to the meeting with the British Bishops on the boundary of Wessex, Hwiccia, and Wales ; we may if we please apply the story of his curse on the men of Stroud for tying a fish's tail to the back of one of his retinue, to the Gloucestershire town of that name ; for although it is more commonly given to Strood in Kent, Gocelin puts it in Dorsetshire. Gloucestershire might be taken as a mean, and probably the story is as true of the one as of the other.

The foundation charter of Bath, in 676, shows us Osric as a missionary king and founder.² As soon, he says, as the evangelic and apostolic dogmas had been communicated to him after his baptism, he had made it his first resolution to erect an episcopal see and to found monasteries of men and women according to the decree of the synod. Here we have the germ of the See of Worcester. The synod of Hertford, in 673, had by its ninth resolution declared the necessity of an enlarged episcopate. At the moment the movement was suspended, owing, as it is supposed, to the opposition of Winfrith, Bishop of Lichfield. Three years had now elapsed and Winfrith, in 675, had been deposed. Osric and Ethelred were determined to have a bishop at Worcester, and Tatfrith, a monk of Whitby and pupil of S. Hilda, was chosen for the office. Herefordshire had just provided itself with a bishop in the person of Putta, late of Rochester : but the See of Lichfield was not yet divided, and until that was done Tatfrith could not be consecrated. The division was completed in the council of Hatfield in 680, but by this time Tatfrith was dead. Bosel was appointed in his place : he was consecrated to be the first Bishop of Worcester in 680, by Theodore of Canterbury, and retained his See until 691, when he resigned from infirmity. His pontificate coincides with the remaining years of Osric, whose last act seems to have been a share in the appointment of Otfor, the second bishop. Osric disappears from Hwiccia in the same mysterious way in which he appeared there.

² C. D. 12, d. Nov. 6, 676, Hât Bathu. Berhtana is Abbess, and it is a *monasterium sanctarum virginum*. Bernguidi and Folc-

burga are mentioned in a Mercian Charter of 681, C. D. 21.

In the year 692, we find Ethelred³ granting lands without mention of a viceroy, but the next year Oshere appears as king. The charters in which Oshere's name occurs, prior to this date, are looked on as spurious; if however they represent, as is possible, real grants, we may suppose that Oshere may have been a son of Oswald, the brother of Osric, and have succeeded to the government of Worcestershire as early as 680. He also was a munificent founder; he granted land at Penitanham⁴ to Earl Cuthberht for a monastery for Abbess Cuthswitha;⁵ at Ripple for a monastery for Abbot Frithowald, and at Withington for Abbess Dunna, of whom I shall have to speak again.

Oshere was succeeded by his sons Æthelric, Æthelheard, and Æthelweard, about 704; but these are no longer kings, only comites, subreguli, and duces; the inheritance of Æthelheard seems to have fallen to Alhferth, who may probably have succeeded to the viceroyalty; Alhferth's daughter, Abbess Ethelburga,⁶ is spoken of by Aldred who was viceroy in 777 in a way that leads me to believe her to have been his sister. If she was, then Eanberht, Uhtred, and Aldred⁷ were sons of Alhferth, and held the government conjointly, and as survivors, until 789, or later.⁸ About this time we read of Wigferth duke of the Hwiccas, who with his wife was buried under a cross in the Cathedral cemetery. In 800 Æthelmund appears as Ealdorman; Æthelric, his son, does not seem to have succeeded him, but to have gone on pilgrimage and left his estate to the church. From the contests about his inheritance which followed, I conclude that the family was

³ C. D. 32, Æthelred grants Heanburg to Ootfor: for S. Peter's at Worcester.

⁴ Oshere, Ripple, C. D. 17; Penitanham, C. D. 36.

⁵ Cuthswitha: grant at Ingin from the Viceroy in 704—709, C. D. 53.

⁶ Ethelburga, daughter of Alhferth, C. D. 124 & 146; to be distinguished from Ethelburga, daughter of Offa, C. D. 151, and Alcuin. Ep. 59, Ed. Migne: both were Abbesses.

⁷ Aldred left his inheritance to Gloucester: as did Ethelmund certain lands, Mon. Angl. i. 541.

⁸ An attempt at a list of the Viceroy of Hwicca:

Eanhere and Eanfrith, c. 661. Bede iv. 13.

Osric, 675, 692.

Oswald, 681.

Oshere, 692.

Æthelheard, 704, 718, 736, and

Ætheberht, C. D. 55, &c.

Æthelric, 704, 718, 736.

Æthelweard, 704, 716.

Sons of Oshere, C. D. 83.

Eanberht, 757, 759, 757, C. D. 102.

Aldred, 777, 789.

Uhtred, 767, 770.

Alhferth, 781, 798.

Wiferth, 781, 798.

Æthelmund, d. 800—son of Ingeld, C. D. 117, a comes of Uhtred in 767.

Ingeld had been comes to Ethelbald. Lapp. i. 251. Beornheard is comes in C. D. 125.

Æthelric, fl. 804.

now extinct and as I find no more viceroys mentioned, it is probable that the administration of Hwiccia was now merged in that of the sub-kingdom, and at the end of the century in the caldormanship of Mercia.

And I may as well dismiss in this place the subject of the chronology of the bishops. I see no reason to depart from Florence's computation except in the trifling matter which I have noted in my book on the General Chronology of English Bishops.⁹ I will now return to the history of the foundation of the See and Cathedral church. The Worcester annalist who edited the copy of Marianus Scotus, said to be preserved in the Library of C. C. C. Oxford,¹ has added to the account given by Florence of the origin of the See, that Oshere, at the foundation of the Cathedral bestowed lands upon it which were apportioned partly to the bishop, partly to the canons by an act of Archbishop Theodore. This is of course the misrepresentation of a later age: the order of canons *eo nomine* did not exist until many years after this date; it may however be worth while to inquire what sort of a society it was which constituted the germ of the present chapter. The question may seem a trifling one, more especially as the grounds on which we are to seek an answer to it are extremely scanty; as, however, it serves to bring out some few points of interest, the discussion of it may be taken here.

All that we know of the original occupants of the Cathedral Monastery may be comprised in the two facts that their house is called a "monasterium," the Monastery of S. Peter,² and that they were by and by opposed to a society of monks called the Monastery of S. Mary, which emerges to light a very few years after our first hearing of the Monastery of S. Peter, and to whose occupants the canons of S. Peter's were obliged, under Oswald, to give up their property and capitular character.

We learn from Bede that the original "families" of the English bishops were mixed companies of clerks and monks.

⁹ Mon. Angl. i. 607.

¹ I may however notice that it was a practice of the early Worcester Bishops to retire from the administration of the See before their death, *e.g.* :

Bosel, F. Wig. 691.

Egwin : "illo superstite, Wilfridus præ-

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sulatum suscepit." F. Wig. 717.

Wilferth: signs with Milred. C. D. 95.

² All the principal monasteries in the diocese were dedicated to S. Peter :— Bath, C. D. 193; Gloucester, Mon. Angl. i. 541; Bredon, C. D. 138.

Augustine, the Prior of S. Andrew's at Rome, and first Archbishop of Canterbury, was a monk, and agreeably to the first answer of S. Gregory to his questions, lived monastically with his clergy, having all things in common.

The Irish clergy, to whose agency the north and middle of England were indebted for conversion, were most certainly monks also ; and the bishops probably shared, in some measure, the characteristics of the bishops at home, the principal of which was the subordination of the episcopal to the monastic jurisdiction in all matters not touching purely spiritual functions. Not that such a system ever existed in England as it is agreed to have done in Ireland ; but that as, Bede informs us, was the use at Lindisfarne, the bishop and his clerks, the abbot and his monks lived together in the same monastery, and by the necessary consequence of the inconvenience of such a divided power, the bishop in some churches was not only the head of the clerks but abbot of the monks at the same time. Whether or not we accept the account of the origin of Osric and his family, we know from other sources that the Christianity of Mercia and Hwiccia, as included in it, was derived from Northumbria ; but it must be remembered that it was not until after the consolidation of the two branches of the Church by Theodore that the Cathedral was founded ; whilst, therefore, *à priori*, we are inclined to believe that there was a monastery at Worcester to begin with, in which Bosel and his clerks would be planted, we must not forget to look at Canterbury, from which Theodore would probably take his model for the new cathedrals. What did he find there ? Was the double system devised by Augustine pursued by his successors, or were the monks relegated to S. Augustine's Monastery and the seculars left at Christ Church ? There is a bull of Pope Boniface of the year 615, which, if it really describes a system that continues seventy years later, proves that it was so : and such a conclusion agrees with the subsequent tradition of Canterbury, which places the extinction of the monks about the year 833. The same also may be inferred from the passage of Bede quoted above, whose silence is a presumptive argument that the system introduced by Augustine did continue in his time. On the other hand, the first authentic notice of the Chapter of Canterbury, about 813, shows that they were not strictly monks. We must

add two further presumptions—first, that as the character of a monk did not at this time at all involve the taking of holy orders, a monastic house, however well qualified to be the bishop's *familia*, could not, as a monastic house, furnish a Chapter, which must consist of priests : secondly, that as no rule for priests living in community yet existed, any such community would be popularly described as a monastery. From the first we understand that all the bishop's advisers might be both priests and monks ; and from the second, that the term "monastery" does not exclude the occupancy by secular priests, even without a monk among them.³

Without attempting arbitrarily to decide, we may, I think, feel pretty sure that the Cathedral Society, though it may not have consisted entirely of monks, must have contained considerable monastic elements. Tatfrith, the first person elected to the See, was a monk of S. Hilda ; Bosel, the second, is said to have been the same ; Oftfor, the third, certainly was ; S. Egwin, though with no leaven of Scoticism, was a monk also, probably a regular Benedictine.

It is, however, begging the question to say that the monks were Benedictines. It is questioned whether Augustine and his party were so, and it is certain that if they were so, they only introduced the rule of Benedict in that lax and degenerate form in which they had received it at home. Into the north of England an attempt to introduce Benedictinism was made by Wilfrid, but Benedict Biscop really brought it from Lerins, and that too late to introduce it in all its strictness into any existing English foundation. The theory of the true Benedictines was as irreconcilable with an Episcopal monastery as the necessity of a secular Chapter was with monastic vows. Cassian particularises bishops and women as two of the great risks for monks to avoid, and the strictness of monastic life would be diametrically opposed to the true mission work of the ministry. But the exigencies of the conversion of England brought the two together. Wilfrid, a thorough Benedictine, was also a bishop, and presided over several monasteries at once. So did Egwine at Worcester and Evesham ; S. Aldhelm at Sherborn, Malmesbury, and Bradford. It was, in fact, the custom of the land, and was

³ In 610, Boniface IV. in a council at Rome condemned those who pretended that monks could not discharge the office

of priest. Hussey's note on Bede, H. E. ii. 4, 11.

carried by Anglo-Saxon missionaries into Germany, the only other country in which monastic cathedrals are known to have existed.

Very early, however, the opposition between episcopal rights and monastic claims resulted in the foundation of another monastery. As at Canterbury, S. Augustine's rose without the walls to rival Christ Church within, as the rival minsters stood side by side at Winchester, as in later times Westminster was to S. Paul's, S. Ouen at Rouen to the Cathedral, S. Martin's at Tours to S. Gatian's—so at Worcester, the Monastery of S. Mary was founded in close proximity to the Cathedral.⁴ It is curious that our first notice of S. Mary's occurs shortly after the Council of Clovesho, in 747, in which the rule of S. Benedict was implicitly enforced on all proper monasteries. At the same time Chrodegang instituted the order of Canons, into which the Chapter of Worcester, without following the minutiae of his rule, shortly threw themselves. I think it, then, extremely probable that up to this date, 747, the double system had continued, and that from a separation, ensuing from the acts of the council, between the bishop's clerks and the monks, the origin of the monastic house was derived: in fine, that about 747 the compound society resolved itself into the Secular College of S. Peter and the Monastic Society of S. Mary. They were close together under the eye of the bishop, but so far as I can see they are kept carefully distinct from about 770 to 964, when S. Mary's swallowed up S. Peter's, or as W. Malmsbury more poetically expresses it, the *claviger paradisi* was forced to give way to the *janitrix cœli*.

It appears from a synodal document of S. Wulstan, that the Cathedral was, from time immemorial, the parish church of the city of Worcester, the churches of S. Helen and S. Alban being vicarages or chapels of ease under it. This fact, however, is not at variance with what I have said. Worcester stands in that class of cathedrals which were founded from the beginning in large cities; it is, like Canterbury itself, an instance of a successful missionary establishment attaining its due development. It was not in this case as among the churches founded by the Irish, a bishop setting out with a staff of monks already complete, and fixing his residence in a place

⁴ Can. 24, V. Mabillon, *Acta SS.* i. xxxiii.

adapted as much for retreat as for pastoral care. Nor yet, as in the case of some of the latter sees, Ramsbury, for instance, a bishop set down without a cathedral body at all.⁵ It was not a case like the foundations of Henry I. and Henry VIII., determined only by the fact that in such and such an abbey there were revenues enough to support a bishop : here was a church, the parish church of the city, the city the metropolis of the kingdom ; to such a church a bishop was the necessary complement, the clergy of the parish became the Chapter of the Cathedral.

Whether or not at this early period the monks and clerks used the same church, it would appear almost certain that a new church of S. Mary was built before 770. Possibly one building served the two bodies, the clerks using the choir and the monks the nave ; and this seems almost probable from the fact that the Viceroy Aldred, Uhtred, and Eanberht, in one charter state that their parents were buried in the churchyard of S. Mary's, and in another in that of S. Peter's.⁶ Both charters however bear marks of interpolation ; S. Peter's churchyard was the burial place of the Hwiccan dukes. To suppose that the two churches stood side by side, so that the cemetery belonged to both, is perhaps most reasonable.⁷ The distinction between the two remains to the time of Oswald. The bishopstool belongs to S. Peter's, the monks served God in S. Mary's : under Oswald the bishopstool, though dedicated to S. Peter, is placed in the monastery of S. Mary ; and yet the church of S. Peter continued to the Conquest, for it was repaired in S. Wulstan's time with the stone belonging to the tomb and burial-cross of Wigferth, Duke of the Hwiccas.

I have dwelt at this length on the monastic elements and monastic origin of the cathedral, because it serves to illustrate much of the history of the other monastic establishments in the diocese. In their history as it remains, written for us in the authentic Acts of the Worcester Chartulary, we have exemplifications of almost every stage of the early monastic history of England. The missionary stage may be looked on as exemplified in the Cathedral Minster. Of

⁵ Malmesb. G. P. iii.

⁶ C. D. 102, S. Peter's, spurious ; C. D. 128, S. Mary's, spurious.

⁷ Bede, H. E. ii. 7, says of King Ead-bald of Kent — "Denique et in monas-

terio beatissimi Apostolorum Principis, ecclesiam sanctæ Dei genetricis fecit, quam consecravit archiepiscopus Mel-litus."

this enough has been said. All the earliest monasteries were mission stations. When, about the beginning of the eighth century, the missionary field began to narrow, and the missionary spirit to subside or to seek a new field in Germany, a stage supervened which is marked by two decidedly opposite phases. The devotional spirit which had found work in missions now took refuge in an anchoretic asceticism. Such is the origin of Crowland, compared with Peterborough; such, if we may believe the authenticity of the Evesham charters, was Evesham compared with Worcester: such was beyond all doubt the monastery of S. Mary compared with the cathedral of S. Peter. These monasteries or rather the best of them followed the example of S. Augustine's at Canterbury, and the Benedictine rule as amplified by Cassiodorus: they were not only places of devotion and penitentiaries,⁸ but schools of learning. I think that there can be no doubt that this characteristic was owing to Benedictinism—though it may not have been peculiar to it. Certainly both St. Augustine's, the school of the south, and Jarrow and Wearmouth, the home of Bede, the school of the north, were Benedictine by this time. What they were in these parts of England, *Bredon* probably was in Hwiccia: and I shall adduce *Bredon* as a pattern instance of this particular development.

Bredon was founded by Eanulf of Mercia, the cousin of Ethelbald the king, in the year 716. The year is fixed by the fact that it was done by the permission of Ethelbald who began to reign in that year and by the advice of Egwine who died the following year. It was a seminary of useful learning and produced an Archbishop of Canterbury, Tatwin, within seventeen years of its foundation. It was dedicated to S. Peter, as was also the monastery of Bredon in Gyrvia which has been confounded with it. Offa, who was the grandson of the founder, was its great benefactor; he gave it lands at Evenlode (to revert to it on the death of Ridda, his wife Bucga, and their daughter Heaburge), at Warsetfeld,⁹ Cestune and Wreddehale, at Teddington, Codswell, near the Mons Hwicciorum, Washburn and Northtun. It was still in being in 848 when Beorhtwulf, at the request of Hum-

⁸ Penitentiaries. See Theodore's "Penitential" *passim*: e.g. Oslaf, a Thane of King Ethelred, "nunc manet in Dei servitio in civitate quæ nostratium dicitur

Wegernacester," C. D. 34.

⁹ Grants to Bredon. Evenlode, C. D. 120; Warsetfeld, &c., 138; Tettington, &c, C. D. 140.

berht, prince of the Tonsets, freed it from imposts, and at this time it is said to have been held by 400 monks. Eanmund is mentioned as being then abbot. This is the last we hear of it; it was probably soon after absorbed into the bishopstool, to which it had long belonged as a villa episcopalis at the time of the Conquest.¹ Eanulf also founded a monastic house at Westbury. Of Evesham I shall say nothing—it would of course require quite separate treatment, and so little is authentically known of its early history, that it would hardly deserve more than a casual mention.

The other development of monasticism or rather pseudo-monasticism is that described by Bede in the letter to Archbishop Ecgberht. Laymen, unexercised in the use of monastic life, unendowed with the love of it, give money to the kings and buy for themselves, under the pretence of building monasteries, territories in which they may indulge their own licence: they get these grants attested and confirmed by bishops, abbots, and temporal dignities: and there they assemble a number of people, not monks, but persons expelled from other monasteries, their own satellites, their wives and children. Without going so far as to say which of the Worcestershire monasteries exactly represents Bede's description, we shall see that, in a large number, the provision for the family of the founder was a more leading object than any devout purpose. I will adduce, in illustration of this, the monasteries of Fladbury, Sture in Usmere, that of Abbot Headda, and Withington.

1. Fladbury was one of the earliest foundations: it was given to Oftfor by Ethelred, about 691:²—Egwine exchanged it with Æthelheard the viceroy for Stratford, and from Æthelheard it descended by inheritance to Alfred, and Aldred.³ Aldred gave it to his kinswoman Abbess Ethelburga as a provision, with reversion to the cathedral: on her death it fell in and was confirmed to the bishopstool by Kenulf, in a charter without date.⁴

2. Sture in Usmere,⁵ supposed to be Kidderminster, was

¹ Possibly I am mistaken in distinguishing Bredon from other monasteries of the age by the intention of the founder; it may have owed its protection and aggrandisement to the fact that it became a monastery of royal foundation by the

succession of Offa, the grandson of Eanulf, to the crown of Mercia.

² C. D. 33.

³ C. D. 146.

⁴ C. D. 215.

⁵ Sture, C. D. 80.

founded in 736 by Cyneberht : he made his son Ceolferth, Abbot, who left it with the rest of his estates to the See.⁶

3. In 759, Eanberht, Uhtred, and Aldred,⁷ gave an estate at Onnanford to Abbot Headda. He, in the time of his kinsman, Bishop Heathored, left this and the rest of his property to Worcester, under condition, "*quod mei hæredes, in mea genealogia, in ecclesiastico gradu de virili sexu percipiant, quamdiu in mea prosapia tam sapiens et præsciens inveniri potest qui rite et monastice ecclesiasticam normam regere queat, et nunquam potestati laicorum subdetur.*" This condition with all its limitations is very different in spirit from the charge of Benedict Biscop.⁸ It were better that the whole monastery should return to an everlasting wilderness than that his brother should be made Abbot there. Beware of choosing an abbot from regard to his family only.

4. Withington.⁹—This was given by King Oshere to her Abbess Dunna and her daughter Bucga, to build a monastery on. Dunna at her death left it to her granddaughter Hrotwari, a minor. Her mother Bucga, although disqualified by matrimony, took possession of the monastery as abbess, and when Hrotwari was old enough to take it, declined to surrender ; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the synod of the church were appealed to, Bucga was compelled to surrender, and the reversion of the monastery on the death of Hrotwari was secured to Worcester. It fell in during the pontificate of bishop Milred, who gave it for life to Abbess Ethelburga.

The frequent mention of Abbesses in these records leads me to speak of this curious transgression of the Benedictine rule. For these monasteries were not all nunneries, and seem to have been given to abbots or abbesses as suited family arrangement. I have already mentioned Cassian's rule¹ that the monks should particularly avoid bishops and women. Both customs, that of cathedral monks and that of monasteries governed by women, are clearly deducible from Irish precedent. Not to spend time upon it—the French monasteries of the rule of Columbanus, and the English school of Hilda, from which so many bishops proceeded, are instances

⁶ C. D. 127.

⁷ Headda, C. D. 105, 169.

⁸ Bede, *Vitæ Abbat.* c. 9.

⁹ Withington, C. D. 82, 124.

¹ Cassian, V. Gieseler ii. 19.

in point. Theodore in his "Penitential" has a provision to the effect that it is wrong for women to have monasteries of men and for men to have monasteries of women, but since he found the custom existing in the country he would not abrogate it. The great prevalence of such houses in England is a proof of the extent to which the whole church was leavened with Scottish discipline. This Ethelburga, the daughter of Alfred, has been supposed to be the foundress of S. Mary's Abbey, but this is without authority; she certainly had monasteries at Fladbury and Withington.² These family monasteries were not intended to be permanent: they were founded plainly for the cheap support of a member of the connexion, and the reversion of them to the Mother Church in many cases is provided for: possibly it was a condition on which their immunities were purchased from the pious princes, a cheap way of making the best of both worlds.

All these monasteries, however, whether founded in devotion or in worldly policy, had their relation to the bishopstool. Exempt monasteries, in the later sense of the term, were not yet introduced into England: at least there is no authority for any thing like an exempt jurisdiction: the earliest grant of exemption is to Chertsey about A.D. 680, and next comes the one of Woking, which I brought before the Institute last year;³ these only concern the internal and secular concerns of the house, the spiritual supervision still belongs to the bishop. The bishop is still the representative and head of the whole church in the diocese, has certain rights even in the property⁴ of the monasteries, and a reversion of the property of the extinct is in some cases secured to the See by deed, in many others apparently by lapse. In the latter part of the century the reversions of the houses that had been founded for two or three lives began to fall in, but the cathedral was not suffered to enter on them without a struggle. I will instance two or three of these cases as illustrating other points as well. 1. The great monastery of Bath was still subject to the bishopstool of the

² Another Abbess Eanburga is mentioned by Offa, C. D. 141; the land at Homtun granted to her must have lapsed to Worcester in 781. C. D. 143.

³ Arch. Journ. vol. xviii. pp. 204, 211. The Chertsey privilege has not been printed: it occurs in MS. Cotton. Vitellius A. xiii., probably interpolated.

⁴ *e.g.* Bishop Ælhun in 849, C. D. 262, gives to King Berhtwulf lands, which had been given to Bredon by Offa in 780, some of which had been taken from Bishop Heaberht in 840, C. D. 245, and restored. Cf. C. D. 140, 262. Also Offa grants lands to Eanburga on the sole subjection to S. Peter's, Worcester, C. D. 141

metropolis: but by 781 that also had fallen in. Offa laid claim to it, but as he knew the tenacious character of the Bishop Heathored, he thought it advisable to lay claim to a good deal more; he asserted that Bath, Stratford, Kidderminster, and lands at Bredon, Homtun, and Stour, belonged to him as of the inheritance of King Ethelbald. A synod was held at Brentford.⁵ Offa compelled Heathored to give up Bath on condition of having the remaining lands confirmed to him: the compromise is signed by all the bishops of England.

2. Another case is the inheritance of Æthelric,⁶ son of Æthelmund the ealdorman, and Ceolburga, who was probably afterwards Abbess of Berkley. Ethelmund seems to have founded a monastery at Deerhurst, and to have been buried there: he was killed in 800 at the battle of Kempford. Ethelric, his son, went on pilgrimage to Rome, having before his departure obtained leave of a witenagemot, at Clovesho, to mortgage his property to any one he pleased. On his return he recovered his lands, and in a synod at Acle devised them, some to Deerhurst, some to Gloucester, and some to private individuals, with a reversion to Worcester. Among these was his mother Ceolburga, to whom he gives forty-three *manentes* at Westminster, that was in fact a monastery at Westbury, that she may have as long as she lives a defence and maintenance against the Berclingas, whoever they were. Ceolburga, Abbess of Berkley, died in 805. Ethelric appears to have died before her. In 824, after the death of king Cenwulf, the suit emerges. The monastery of Berkley claimed it against Heaberht the bishop. It seems probable that Abbess Cynedritha, the daughter and heiress of Cenwulf, had some hand in the business. She was an unprincipled woman, had murdered her own brother, and had taken possession of large property belonging to the See of Canterbury which her father had confiscated.⁷ I imagine that she must have succeeded to the Abbacy of Berkley on the death of Ceolburga, but this is not clear. The Berkley family⁸ were obliged to give up their claims, and the bishop proved his right by the oaths of fifty mass priests and ten deacons at

⁵ C. D. 143.

⁶ *Inh.* of Æthelric, C. D. 186, 218.

⁷ C. D. 220, &c.

⁸ Berkley is an illustration of the female Abbacies.

Tilhère, Abbot of Berkley, was made Bishop of Worcester in 777.

Ceolburga was Abbess in 805.

Ethelhun, Abbot of Berkley, was Bishop in 915.

Westminster, and others, a hundred and eighty altogether. The monastery of Westminster or Westbury, for which this contest was carried on, was afterwards repaired by Oswald, and became the nursery of the abbey of Ramsey.

3. The Abbey of Winchelcomb was founded by Cenulf about 811, probably for his daughter Cynedritha : many years after the extinction of the family a quarrel arose between Worcester and Winchelcomb about parts of the inheritance of Cenulf.⁹ Cynedritha and Ealflæda her successor had made grants which were falling in in 897 ; in that year duke Æthelwulf directed that, in order to make peace between the two monasteries, certain lands specified should be adjudged to Worcester, “*pro renovatione et reconciliatione pacis.*” This is a curious glimpse into the dark : we see the Abbey of Winchelcomb, about which nothing else is known, rivalling the Cathedral as residuary legatee of the Mercian prince.¹

The Cathedral of S. Peter grew up, heedless that the younger sister by its side was to supersede it and enter into its labours. The Abbey of S. Mary, to which I have had occasion to refer so often, was founded as I have supposed about 747. In 770, the viceroy Uhtred gave it lands at Stoke,² near Salwarp : about the same time it came in for the reversion of Osred,³ one of the royal family of the Hwiccas, and was bound thereby to pray for the soul of Æthelbald ; at this time Uttel, Bishop of Hereford in 793, seems to have been Abbot. In 777 Aldred the viceroy procured it a grant at Secgesbearwe⁴ from Offa ; and another grant from the same king at Ductune,⁵ bears the same date. Berhtulf⁶ in the next century and the other sub-kings of Mercia follow as benefactors ; in 899 it appears to have had an abbot Cynelm ; in 929 the church is called basilica, it was already aiming at being the Cathedral : the last grant I find made specifically to S. Peter's is in 930 or 934. From that time all grants are made to the bishopstool without specifying the dedication of the church, and from 964 to S. Mary.

⁹ C. D. 323.

¹ Another suit of inheritance called the inheritance of Hemele and Duda, at Intanbeorg, between Bishop Heathored and Wulfheard, the son of Cussa, was decided in 789, at Celchyth, on condition of it reverting to Worcester on Wulfheard's death : confirmed by Wulfheard himself to Bishop Deneberht at Clovesho in 803.

C. D. 156, 183.

² C. D. 118.

³ C. D. 90.

⁴ C. D. 131.

⁵ C. D. 134, and there is another grant marked spurious, C. D. 142, 145 ; the monks are mentioned in 779. C. D. 154.

⁶ Beorhtwulf, C. D. 249.

There are many other points of interest which I should have been glad to go into, but I have already exceeded my limits, and I do not wish to go beyond the eighth century. I must however mention, 1st, the synod of Clovesho in 805; there Bishop Deneberht appeared with six priests; Hyseberht, abbot; Thingferth, abbot; Pæga, abbot; Freothomund, abbot; Coenferth and Seleræd, priests. Thingferth was Abbot of Evesham; Hyseberht, as being named, first was perhaps Abbot of S. Mary's; Freothomund seems to have been the Abbot of Westbury in 825; Pæga I cannot identify. There were, however, in the diocese at the time the following monasteries :⁷—

Berkley, Blockley, Daylesford, Gloucester, Cliffe, S. Michael, Fladbury, Evesham, Deerhurst, Hanbury, Bredon, Bradley, Kempsey, Pershore, Stratford, Kidderminster, Bath, Ripple, Penitanham, Twining, Winchelcomb, Worcester, Westbury, Withington.

I will only mention in conclusion that the accusation against Oswald of impoverishing the canons of Worcester in order to make way for the monks, drawn from the number of grants to laymen executed by him, falls to the ground if we examine the rules that he has laid down for the tenure of the grants: they are a sort of leaseholds with ample provision reserved for the lords and owners.

⁷ Bath, uts. p. 250.

Bredon, uts. C. D. 120, 138, 140, 248, 261.

Berkley, uts. p. 251.

Blockley, C. D. 278.

Bradley, C. D. 79, 156, 183.

Cliffe, S. Michael's Monastery, C. D. 150, 315.

Daylesford: grant of six cassats by Æthelbald to Begia to build a monastery, in 718, C. D. 69, given by Beorhtulf to Worcester in 841, C. D. 251.

Deerhurst, C. D. 186, 218.

Evesham, Gloucester.

Hanbury: reversion left by Offa to Worcester, C. D. 166; Heanburg monasterium, C. D. 237; and C. D. 32.

Fladbury, uts. p. 248.

Kempsey. Cenulf in 799, C. D. 176, grants lands to Balthun, Abbot of Kempsey, at Hereford; Bishop Deneberht about 802, C. D. 181, grants Bearmundeslea to Balthun with reversion to Worcester, Bal-

thun being an old Worcester monk: and Deneberht also grants land at Hereford, which may have been Balthun's, to Eanswitha. C. D. 182

Kidderminster, uts. p. 248.

Penitanham, uts. p. 241. C. D. 36.

Pershore: founded 681; refounded, reg. Cenulf, by Beornoth.

Ripple, uts. p. 241. C. D. 17.

Twining: given by Duke Alfred to Worcester in the time of Heathored; see C. D. 203; surrendered by Worcester to Cenulf.

Stratford: given to Worcester by Berhtwulf in 845, C. D. 258; existing still in 872, C. D. 303.

Winchelcomb, uts. p. 252.

Westbury, uts. p. 251. C. D. 166.

Withington, uts. p. 249.

Cheltenham and Beccanford, had belonged to Hereford. The Council of Clovesho, C. D. 184, decided that the procurations be divided between the Bishops of Worcester and Hereford.