Original Documents.

CHARTER OF HUGH OF BAYEUX TO THE CHURCH AND CANONS OF ST. MARY OF TORRINGTON, *temp.* HENRY II.

Communicated by the Rev. E. VENABLES, Precentor of Lincoln.

THE following document is especially interesting from its connection with the founder of the Gilbertine Priory of St. Catherine's, Lincoln, as well as with Gilbert of Sempringham himself, the founder of that order, and from the circumstance of its proving the existence of a religious foundation in Lincolnshire which was unknown either to Dugdale or Tanner. It came into my possession through the kindness of a gentleman, who bought it, with a large number of other documents, at an auction, somewhere in Herefordshire. Seeing its intimate connection with Lincoln, he was good enough to forward it to me, and it will for the future have a place among the muniments of the Chapter.

It is a grant of an oxgang of land together with a dwelling and the right of pasturage in the parish of Caburn, made by Hugh of Bayeux to the Church and Canons of St. Mary of Torrington. Caburn is a small village of Lincolnshire, situated in one of the Wold valleys, about a mile and a half north-east of Caistor. Torrington is another Lincolnshire village, or rather a union of two villages, East and West Torrington, three miles north-east of the small town of Wragby. Although this document is the first proof of the existence of a religious foundation at Torrington, local tradition points to a moated area near the Grange as the site of a religious house, and I have been informed by the incumbent, Rev. T. W. Mossman, that he believes it to have been a Gilbertine foundation. This is strengthened by the appearance of the name of Gilbert of Sempriugham, the founder of the order, as one of the witnesses.

The grantor, Hugh of Bayeux, was the eldest son of Ranulph of Bayeux, by his wife Margaret, daughter of Alan of Lincoln, who was, according to Dugdale, "an eminent baron in those parts." The Bayeux family had large possessions in the northern part of Lincolnshire. Among the lordships was that of Goxhill, in which five knights' fees were held of Ranulph of Bayeux by Peter of Goxhill, the founder of the first house of the Premonstratensian order in England, situated at Newhouse in the parish of Goxhill. Ranulph, the father, gave an oxgang of land to this house, in the same parish of Caburn in which the land lay named in the present document, bestowed by the son on Torrington. Hugh of Bayeux was also a benefactor to Sempringham, bestowing on the nuns there lands within that parish and in Billingborough.[1]

[1] Dugdale's "Baronage," i. 573.

The grant is witnessed by persons of no ordinary rank and importance. The first is the fourth Bishop of Lincoln, Robert de Querceto, or de Chesney, the founder of St. Catherine's Gilbertine Priory, at Lincoln. He was consecrated Dec. 19, 1148, and died Jan. 26, 1167. He is followed by no less a personage than Master Gilbert of Sempringham, the founder of the Gilbertine order, to which, as we have said, the Canons of Torrington may have belonged. Gilbert, not yet *Saint* Gilbert, died in 1189. His canonization took place in 1202. Of Master Malger, who succeeds, I can say nothing. He was probably a priest, perhaps a canon of the cathedral, and doubtless worthy of the good company in which we find him.

The three names that follow are those of some of the first laymen in Lincolnshire. Walter Deincourt, who stands at their head, was the grandson of Walter Deincourt, one of the Norman knights who accompanied William the Conqueror on the invasion of England, whose distinguished services were rewarded by his grateful sovereign with 36 lordships. Of these seventeen were in Lincolnshire, of which Blankney, near Lincoln (now the seat of the Chaplins) was the chief, being "the head of his barony." The Deincourts were kinsfolks both of the Conqueror and of Remigius of Fecamp, the first bishop of Lincoln, who translated the see thither from Dorchester. This we learn from the remarkable leaden monumental tablet of Walter's son William, who dying while still a youth receiving his education at the court of William Rufus, was buried near the north door of the Cathedral which his kinsman Remigius had erected, and was commemorated by an inscription discovered in 1670, and still preserved in the Cathedral Library. The plate is engraved in "Dugdale's Baronage,"[2] as well as more correctly in our own Lincoln volume.[3] As it is there stated that William, the son, not Walter, the father, was *regia stirpe progenitus*, it is probable that the royal kinship was through Walter's wife, who it is suggested in the memoir in the Lincoln volume, may have been a daughter, perhaps illegitimate, of the Conqueror himself. It is possible, however, that the lady in question may have been a member of the Anglo-Saxon royal family. If so the relationship to the Conqueror vanishes. The Walter who witnesses the grant before us, was the son of Ralph the eldest son of Walter, the Conqueror's favourite, by Basilia his wife, and consequently nephew to William, of whose epitaph I have been speaking.

Richard de Haia, who succeeds, was the son of Robert de Haia, or de la Haye, who obtained from Henry I. the honour of Halnaker, near Goodwood in Sussex, and was a great benefactor to the Abbey of Essaix in Normandy. Richard, together with his brother Robert, founded the Premonstratensian Abbey of Barlings, 6 miles to the north-east of Lincoln, and was the cause of a cell of the same order being erected at Cameringham by the gift of his lordship in that parish to the monastery of Blanchelande in Normandy. Richard de la Haye was the father of Nichola, who married Gerard de Camville, a lady who played a distinguished part in the events which signalised the reigns of Richard I. and John. A woman, with the courage and resolution of a man, she was a stout adherent of Lackland through all his varied fortunes, and was rewarded by being appointed to the shrievalty of her county, and,

[2] Vol. i. p. 386.

[3] Proceedings of Archæological Institute, Lincoln, 1848, p. 248.

after the death of her husband, with the governorship of the castle of Lincoln, which had been bestowed by King John on de Camville, Fulk de Breaute—we could have wished the good lady a better deputy than this ruffianly brigand—being appointed her assistant. The picturesque tale of her surrender of the keys of the castle to King John during one of his visits to Lincoln, pleading her inability to sustain the fatigue and anxiety of so important a charge by reason of her advanced age, and the king's gracious restoration of them to her, and of her retaining the governorship "all the life of King John, and after his decease under King Henry, the father of the King that now is," is found in the "Inquisitiones," A° 3 Ed. I., 1274–5, and is printed in the Lincoln volume. The energetic old lady died at her manor of Swayton, near Folkingham, in 1231.[4]

The only remaining name, that of William Curceis, cannot be certainly identified. He may possibly have been William, the son of Richard de Curcy, the celebrated leader in the Battle of the Standard, by whom (William) the Alien Priory of Stoke Courcy, in Somersetshire, was founded; or a William de Curcy, who appears as one of the witnesses to the treaty between Henry II. and William King of Scots, in 1174, and died the same year Justice of Ireland. But we are shooting in the dark; especially as it is not certain that the name should not be read Curteis.

The deed may probably be placed between 1150 and 1160. It is in excellent preservation, the ink only being a little faded. The seal, a very coarse inartistic lump, bears the impression of the Holy Lamb carrying a banner.

The deed may be read as follows, expanding the contractions:—

"Hugo de Baiocis Episcopo et Capitulo Lincolniensi et universis sanctæ Ecclesiæ filiis Salutem. Notum sit tam futuris quam præsentibus me dedisse et concessisse unam bovetam terræ in Kaburnia cum una masura et cum communi pastura ejusdem villæ Deo et Ecclesiæ beatæ Mariæ de Torentona et Canonicis inibi degentibus in perpetuam et liberam eleemosinam. His testibus Roberto Episcopo Lincolniensi, Magistro Gilberto de Seppingham, Magistro Malgero, Waltero de Eyncurt, Ricardo de Haia, Willielmo Curceis."

Seal of pale brown wax, of a very friable kind. The edges much clipped, so that no portion of the legend remains. When perfect it was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. In the centre is the Holy Lamb and Flag. The whole very indistinct.

Recent excavations on the site of St. Catherine's Priory, Lincoln, with which the foregoing document has some connection, have brought to light some architectural and sepulchral fragments which, though as yet few in number, are yet sufficiently remarkable in character to justify some account of the discovery in this place.

But it may be as well first to say something of the building of which the remains formed part. The Gilbertine Priory of St. Catherine's, Lincoln, was founded by Robert de Chesney, Bishop of Lincoln, the first-named witness to the above charter, who succeeded to the episcopate in 1148. It was in December of that year that Bishop de Chesney was con-

[4] Dugdale's "Baronage," vol. i. 597. "Rotuli Hundredorum," vol. i. p. 309.

secrated, so that if the date for the foundation of the priory given by Dugdale is correct, the same month must have witnessed the new prelate's entrance on his see, and the laying of the first stone of the new priory. It is evident that Robert de Chesney had a taste for magnificent undertakings, and that he was not always careful to count the cost before he embarked in them. "He was a young prelate," writes one, "and much embarrassed the see by his undertakings." Giraldus Cambrensis complains bitterly of the injury done to the bishoprick by him and his namesake Robert Bloet, "Crevit diocesis Lincolniensis per Remigium sed decrevit enormiter per Robertum et Robertum." Not content with the modest lodging in the tower over the East-gate, granted to his predecessor, Bishop Alexander, by Henry I., he obtained a site for a new episcopal residence from Henry II., A.D. 1155. Here he commenced building the palace, completed by his successors, the two Hughs, and 200 years later by Bishop William Alnwick, a portion of which is now rising from its ruins for the accommodation of the students of the Chancellor's Theological School, at the sole charge of his noble-hearted and munificent successor, Bishop Wordsworth.

This site, though granted by the king, was not given by him. Its purchase cost Bishop Chesney a good round sum. He also expended a large amount in the purchase of a London house for himself and his successors, near the Old Temple, in Holborn. The result of all these extravagancies, among which the erection of St. Catherine's was not the least costly, was that, according to Giraldus, he was compelled to pawn the "ornamenta" of his church to one of the wealthy Jews, Aaron by name, who had made Lincoln their abode.

The rule adopted at the new foundation of St. Catherine's was that recently promulgated by Master Gilbert of Sempringham, which had just received papal ratification. The reasons for this selection were obvious. The rule was in the fresh flush of novelty. Its founder was himself a Lincolnshire man, born at Sempringham, a village near Bourn, in the south of the county, son of Sir Jocelin of Sempringham, who some say was a knight, some rector of the church there. Possibly both accounts are true, the layman having perhaps taken holy orders after the death of his wife. The lately deceased prelate, Bishop Alexander, had proved himself a warm patron of the new order, the establishment of which he had eagerly promoted as reflecting a peculiar glory on his own diocese, one of his last acts being the foundation of a Gilbertine house at Haverholme, near Sleaford, on its desertion by its first Cistercian occupants. Besides, the holy founder was still living, indeed his death did not take place for forty years, A.D. 1189, ready to support and guide the new foundation from his own retreat at Sempringham.

The new order, the only purely English monastic order, was for a time very popular. The Priory of St. Catherine's was one of thirteen houses St. Gilbert saw founded before his death. In the county of Lincoln alone there were eleven Gilbertine houses, situated respectively at Lincoln, Sempringham, Haverholme, Alvingham, Bullington, Cattely, Holland Bridge, Newstead on Ancholme, North Ormsby, Sixhills, and Tunstall. The peculiarity of the Gilbertine houses, as is familiar to most of us, was the union of religious of both sexes in the same monastery. The female inmates followed the Cistercian form of the Benedictine rule, the males the rule of St. Austin, the founder adding no inconsider-

able number of regulations of his own, rendered essential by the special circumstances of his foundations. The "Institutiones" of the founder occupy thirty-nine folio pages of double columns in the last edition of Dugdale's "Monasticon," and well deserve careful perusal. They are full of curious and interesting matter. A Gilbertine house, where the founder's scheme was fully carried out, embraced four different establishments: one of canons, another of nuns, a third of lay brethren, and a fourth of lay sisters. The rules prescribe a complete separation of the sexes thus somewhat rashly brought together in the same establishment. A turn-table window, *fenestra versatilis*, was provided through which the male and female superiors could hold conferences at stated times on domestic matters. The churches were divided down the centre by a close screen, each division commanding a view of the altar. Windows were constructed in the churches for Confession, and for the reception of Holy Communion. Not even the spiritual directors of the nuns saw or were seen by them except at the hour of death, when extreme unction had to be administered. The regulations for the construction of these windows and their employment are very minute, and the penalty for the violation of them very severe. Whenever any conference between religious of different sexes was necessary, neither was directly to address the other, but the third person was always to be used. Some few of the Gilbertine houses contained canons alone, but the majority were for persons of both sexes. The number of females exceeded that of the males. The thirteen houses founded by St. Gilbert himself contained seven hundred brethren and fifteen hundred sisters.

The absence of large monastic foundations in Cathedral cities, where the Church was served by Secular Canons, is a fact not undeserving of notice. The old hostility between the Seculars and Regulars is thus strikingly illustrated. Where the one had occupied the ground there was no room for the other. Lincoln was no exception to the rule. The comparatively insignificant Priory of St. Catherine's was the only monastic house of any importance in Lincoln. Indeed, it was the only one with the exception of a small Benedictine cell of St. Mary's York with its three or four brethren, and the foundations of the Mendicant orders. The situation of St. Catherine's Priory, just outside the southern city gates, at the junction of the two most important roads, the Ermine Street, and Foss Way, as well as the fact of its being the only establishment of the kind, threw upon it many of the duties of hospitality usually performed by our larger religious houses. It was here that in November, 1290, the body of Eleanor, the beloved queen of Edward I., who had died at Harby in the immediate vicinity, rested as its first stage on its way to Westminster. The embalmment was doubtless performed here by some of the body skilled in the medical art, inasmuch as the viscera were interred in the Cathedral beneath the east window, where an altar tomb supporting a brass effigy, similar to that in Westminster Abbey and by the same sculptor, Torel, was erected. This memorial was destroyed by the Parliamentary soldiers, together with the brasses and other metal work of the Minster, after the storming and sack of the Close in 1643. The first of the Eleanor Crosses was erected on Swines-Green, opposite the gates of the Priory. This cross was designed by Master Richard of Stowe (or "of Gainsborough,") *cementarius*, who was

at that time employed by the Dean and Chapter on the works of the Presbytery or Angel Choir of the Cathedral, who received £20 as a first payment for his pains. His own sepulchral memorial, a richly incised slab, still exists in a sadly fractured condition in the south walk of the Cloisters. The Cross was destroyed by the Puritan iconoclasts at the same time as the tomb. St. Catherine's, as we have seen, was founded by a Bishop of Lincoln, and the office of Prior was placed in the gift of his successors. The connection was maintained by the ordinance in the Cathedral Statutes that each newly consecrated Bishop on coming to Lincoln for installation should pass the night at St. Catherine's, and walk thence barefoot the following morning, preceded by a procession of the regular and secular clergy of the city, the whole length of the High Street, to the great west door, where he was received by the Dean and the whole Cathedral staff in silken copes, and conducted to the altar. As the distance from St. Catherine's to the Cathedral is fully two miles, and the streets of Lincoln were never famous for cleanliness, it is not surprising that the statutes should enjoin that the Bishop should wash his feet in the vestibule before he robed himself in his pontificals and was solemnly enthroned.

The traditional duty of hospitality lingered on at St. Catherine's long after the Dissolution. After the surrender to Henry VIII., when William Griffiths was Prior, at the head of a body of fifteen monks, the site and buildings were granted to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, from whom they passed to the ancient family of Grantham, by whom a noble mansion, known as St. Catherine's Hall, was erected out of the Priory ruins. In this house James I. was entertained by the Granthams on his northern progress, the circumstances of which are given by Nichols. A few years later one of those by whom his ill-fated son was brought to the block, one of the finest models of Puritan virtue, Colonel Hutchinson, so well known from the Memoir by his widow, spent his schoolboy days with his kinsfolk in this same mansion. As long also as St. Catherine's Hall maintained its ancient dignity, it was the custom for her Majesty's Judges of Assize to halt there for refreshment before they entered the city, as a preparation for the steep ascent which conducted them to their Lodgings.

From the Granthams the Priory estate passed to the Manbys, by whom the mansion was pulled down about the middle of the last century, portions of the buildings of the Priory, used as barns and stables, survived a little longer, but even these disappeared before the close of the century, having been pulled down for the sake of the materials. The very foundations of the church were dug up for the value of the stone, and the sepulchral slabs and stone coffins discovered ruthlessly broken to pieces. The site continued to bear the name of St. Catherine's Priory, but so complete was its destruction that, until the last few weeks, there was not a single stone visible to indicate the existence of any ecclesiastical buildings. The very position of the fabric was entirely lost. Within the last month, however, the removal of some earth, preparatory to the formation of a new road and the erection of some houses in this rapidly increasing suburb, has brought to light some architectural and monumental fragments. The building operations at present have only just commenced, and the amount of ground disturbed is but small. It is not too much to hope that as the work extends, and the excavations

become deeper, the results will be still more valuable than those already attained.

The fragments dug up consist of Norman and Early English capitals, a large quantity of Early English vaulting rib stones with fine roll mouldings, bases, and other architectural members, the excellence of the workmanship of which seems to point to their having formed part of the church. This probability is strengthened by the number of sepulchral slabs, and other indications of interment discovered. A stone coffin was disinterred containing a perfect skeleton, which was immediately destroyed in a spirit of wanton mischief by the workman. Another perfect stone coffin was laid bare in the same place, but was covered up again. The sepulchral slabs discovered are fine specimens of their class. One bears a very fine incised floriated cross of large size. The inscription round the verge is provokingly clear where one could pardon indistinctness, and illegible where distinctness is important. It runs :—"Hic jacet Johannes de Wyl . . . . quondam . . . mensis die tercio . cujus aie p̄pcietur Deus, Amen." A second slab bears on a horizontal scroll along its centre, "Hic jacet Johannes Bieluft." A third shows traces of an incised figure with a depression for the head and bust, which had been executed in alabaster or mastic.

Among the architectural fragments may be particularized two Norman capitals cut out of the same block, evidently belonging to a doorway, of which some pieces of zigzag moulding lying near may have formed part. These and other specimens of Norman work must have belonged to the original church of Bishop de Chesney. The other fragments are chiefly Early English. The rib moulds already spoken of are of great excellence, and there is one magnificent boss of large size, the trefoil foliage of which is beautifully undercut. A considerable number of Early English bell-capitals have also been turned up, thus indicating additions to the buildings in the thirteenth century. Only one piece of wall has yet been found *in situ*. It runs east and west, and shows the footings of buttresses and a plain chamfered base moulding on the northern side. It may have been the wall of an aisle. This fragment is about 15 ft. long and 4 ft. thick.