

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE BUILDING
OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WELLS

(c. 1186-1242)

By J. ARMITAGE ROBINSON, D.D., F.B.A., F.S.A. (Dean of Wells)

This paper and its companion, which deals with the contemporary building at Glastonbury, were written in the spring of 1914, when I first had the advantage of association with my friend Dr. John Bilson in a fresh examination of the problems which are here discussed. The paper on Glastonbury remains practically unchanged; but the paper on Wells has been revised again and again, as the careful investigation of the architectural evidence gradually suggested more secure results. The documentary evidence was sparse and vague, and in the past it had been not only imperfectly presented, but also very variously interpreted in the endeavour to harmonise it with the different conclusions which from time to time were drawn from the study of the fabric itself. I felt from the first that, in view of the confusion which prevailed, it was important that the evidence of the documents should be set out by itself as a preliminary guide to the interpretation of the fabric. But, as the fabric began to reveal its own story with reasonable certainty, it became necessary to read the documents again in the light thus thrown upon them, lest perchance too narrow a view might have been taken of the meaning which they must necessarily bear. The result has been an increased caution in drawing conclusions from materials which are often capable of more interpretations than one.

I have had the opportunity of following step by step the exceptionally detailed examination of the fabric which Dr. Bilson's ripe experience has enabled him to conduct, and of discussing with him each point of interest as it arose.

Our respective lines of approach have issued in a full agreement, if exception be made for a difference of three or four years in determining the date of the beginning of the work at Wells. Comparison with the earliest surviving portions of the great church at Glastonbury leads Dr. Bilson to declare that it is difficult to place the beginning of Wells

much earlier than about 1190. My study of the documents makes it difficult to place it later than 1186. I do not for a moment question Dr. Bilson's judgment that certain details of the first work at Wells show a distinct advance on the corresponding work at Glastonbury. But where, as here, it is only a question of a very few years, I hesitate to apply the general rule that the 'more advanced' must of necessity be later in date; and I venture to ask whether perchance the Wells master-mason may not himself have been 'more advanced' in outlook and method than his contemporary at Glastonbury. May we not find the solution of our slight discrepancy in a consideration of what is called the personal equation? The reader will see for himself that the documents do not expressly rule out Dr. Bilson's conclusion, and he will probably be surprised at my temerity in suggesting a possible alternative.

The earliest indication that we have of building operations at Wells in the latter part of the twelfth century is a charter by which Bishop Reginald grants for that purpose the proceeds of vacant benefices in the diocese. He begins by declaring the responsibility of a bishop to provide that the honour of God be not tarnished by the mean condition of His House. Accordingly with the consent and at the advice of his archdeacons he has determined to give the support of his authority to an arrangement by which all the fruits of vacant churches shall be applied to the fabric of the church of Wells and be devoted wholly to the building work, until by God's help it be consummated. This decree was made in the chapter of the church of Wells, in presence of Richard the dean, William the precentor, T. the archdeacon, and well-nigh all the canons of the church.¹

¹ R. ii, 14b (Cal. I 530); 'Universis Christi fidelibus ad quos presens carta pervenerit Raginaldus dei gracia Bathoniensis episcopus salutem et dei benedictionem. Hiis quibus est divina dispositione pastoralis officii cura commissa, et ecclesiarum sollicitudo injuncta, summo opere providendum est ut domum domini ea excolant diligencia quod dignitas domini in domus squalore non possit devenustari: hoc igitur zelo ducti, de assensu et consilio archidiaconorum, nostre auctoritatis ad

hoc duximus munimen impendendum ut ad fabricam Wellensis ecclesie, ad cujus regimen sumus domino disponente admissi, fructus omnes et obvenciones vacancium ecclesiarum in nostra diocesi existencium quamdiu vacaverint convertantur, et in usus operationis ex toto cedant, donec per dei miserantis auxilium consummetur. Factum est hoc in capitulo Wellensis ecclesie, presente Ricardo ejusdem ecclesie decano, Willelmo precentore, T. archidiacono, et omnibus fere illius ecclesie canonicis.'

The custom was, as we learn from a charter of Bishop Jocelin's time, that when a church was vacant the proceeds of the benefice, after due provision for the services had been made, went to the bishop and the archdeacon, in the proportion of two-thirds to the former and one-third to the latter.¹ This grant therefore was a substantial contribution on the part of bishop and archdeacons alike.

Before we discuss the date and implications of this charter it is desirable to set side by side with it a document by which Master Alexander, canon of Wells, grants to R. the dean and the chapter, during his life or his tenure of the benefice, all the arable land in demesne of his prebend of Hengstridge, with a moiety of the meadow belonging to it, and the pasture adjoining: he adds besides one mark of silver annually out of his altarage of Hengstridge. This gift is made in lieu of the amount which he is pledged to pay towards the fabric; he is moved to make it, he declares, by 'an earnest longing that through my diligent care the fabric of our church of Wells may rise the more speedily to its desired consummation.' The actual disposal of his gifts he leaves to the discretion of 'those of our brethren and canons who may be in charge of the work.'²

Reading these two charters together we are justified in concluding that a great project of building is on foot. How far it may have advanced we cannot say; but it is plain that the dean and canons have agreed to tax their prebends; the bishop has lent his powerful aid, and has made together with his archdeacons a substantial contribution; and

¹ R. i, 59 (Cal. I 67): Decree of J. bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, 11 July 1215: the bishop assigns his two-thirds to the common fund.

² R. iii, 383b (Cal. I 490): 'Venerabilibus dominis et amicis in Christo karissimis, R. decano et capitulo beati Andree Wellensis, magister Alexander, ejusdem ecclesie canonicus, salutem in vero salutari. *Habens in voluntate et desiderio quod fabrica ecclesie nostre Wellensis ad optatam consummacionem celerius mea sedulitate consurgat, in recompensacionem pecunie quam ad predictam fabricam de prebenda mea de Hengstrigg' ad tempus tenebar exsolvere, dedi et concedi (sic) totam dominicam terram meam arabilem prefate prebende mee quamdiu vixero ad fabricam memoratam*

expediendam, cum medietate totius prati mei ad dictam prebendam meam pertinente, scilicet pratum de Rugehull, cum pastura ad sepedictam prebendam adjacente: dedi etiam eidem fabrice unam marcam argenti annuatim percipiendam in quatuor anni terminis de altalagio meo de Hengstrigg': statuens quod hii de fratribus et canonicis nostris qui operationi predictae fuerint (sic) omnia prenominata dona mea tractent et dispensent sicut ecclesie Wellensi viderint expedire: ita quidem quod, si ego decessero vel recessero, terra predicta cum omnibus prescriptis ad prebendam de Hengstridge et successorem meum cum omni integritate et sine aliqua contradiccione libere revertatur. Quod ut stabile perseveret et firmum, illud presenti scripto cum appositione sigilli mei duxi roborandum'.

Master Alexander, one of the canons, has shown exceptional generosity. It is quite likely that the two charters were granted at or about the same time; at any rate we may note the parallel between the expressions 'until by God's help it be consummated' and 'that it may rise the more speedily to its desired consummation.'

In order to fix an appropriate date we must consider the names which are mentioned in the charters.

1. Bishop Reginald was consecrated in 1174, and died on 26 December 1191, within a month of his promotion to the see of Canterbury.

2. Richard was the second dean of Wells: he succeeded Ivo the first dean at the end of 1163 or during the course of 1164.¹ He attests a charter of Bishop Reginald on 8 November 1186 in company with Master Alexander, Master Walter de Dunstanville and others.² He appears to have died in 1189.

3. William the precentor is better known as William of St. Faith. He was already a canon of Wells before the death of Bishop Robert in 1166. He was certainly precentor before 1187, when he went to the Roman court as the archbishop's agent in company with Peter of Blois and there remained for some eight months. A Salisbury charter seems to enable us to take back his precentorship to some period before the end of 1184.³ Of Ilbert his predecessor we unfortunately only know that he attested some charters about 1174-1175. William of St. Faith was much engaged in public affairs from 1187 onwards, and was working in opposition to the policy of Bishop Reginald in regard to the monks of Canterbury. He probably never returned to Wells in the lifetime of the bishop.

4. The mention of T. the archdeacon does not give us any further help; for a Thomas appears either as archdeacon of Bath or as archdeacon of Wells during the whole of Bishop Reginald's episcopate.

5. Master Alexander has been mentioned above as attesting a charter of 8th November 1186 in company with Walter de Dunstanville. Their names occur together again in an undated document which has reference to the

¹ Dean Ivo was at Woodstock in July 1163: Bruton Chartulary, no. 124 (*inspeximus* of the same, 1 Mar. 1314, Cal. of Patent Rolls).

² Buckland Chartulary, no. 11.

³ *Registrum Osmundi* (Rolls Series), i, 268.

prebend of Hengstridge.¹ Alexander became sub-dean before Michaelmas 1188,² and dean in 1189 or 1190.³

We conclude therefore that Bishop Reginald's charter must be dated probably not earlier than 1184, and certainly not later than 1186. Master Alexander's charter may reasonably be regarded as of the same date; it must at any rate be earlier than Michaelmas 1188.

A new indication of Bishop Reginald's zeal is next to be noted. North Curry was an extensive royal manor, owned by the Saxon kings as early as 904, and it gave its name to the hundred in which it was situated. The church had been granted by K. Stephen to Bishop Robert to make a prebend at Wells.⁴ When K. Richard came to the throne (3 September 1189) he was in sore need of ready money for his Crusade, and he put up lands and offices alike for sale. On 27 November 1189 he granted to Bishop Reginald and the church of Wells the manor, advowson and hundred of North Curry with all its liberties.⁵ Two points of interest which do not appear on the face of this grant are to be learned from the Pipe Roll of 1190-1: first that the bishop paid the king 200 marks for it; and second that this royal benefaction was made 'ad opus ecclesiae,' that is for the building work of the church. The bishop immediately confirmed the property to the common fund of the church.⁶

We have now to consider a grant of exceptional interest which, strange to say, is entered twice in the oldest chartulary of Wells. Nicholas of Barewe, 'in consideration of the good conversation of the canons of Wells and the praiseworthy structure of their rising church,' grants for the increase of their common fund his life-interest in the church of Lovington, in return for an annual pension of two shillings.⁷

Where it first occurs in the chartulary (*Liber Albus* I f. 38) this grant appears between two others which serve

¹ R. i, 21 (Cal. i, 21).

² Cf. R. i, 35 b (Cal. i, 38), and Charter 10 (Cal. ii, 548).

³ For the early deans of Wells reference may be made to my *Somerset Historical Essays* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1921).

⁴ R. i, 11 (Cal. i, 8).

⁵ R. i, 9 (Cal. i, 6).

⁶ R. i, 11 (Cal. i, 9).

⁷ R. i, 61. 'Carta de Luuinton, cc.xlj. Omnibus ad quos presens scriptum peruenerit Nicholas de Barewe clericus salutem. Sciatis me, considerata canoniorum Wellensium honesta conuersacione et surgentis ecclesie sue laudabili structura, concessisse eisdem canonicis ad augmentum commune sue ecclesiam meam de Luuinton, pro anima patris et matris mee, habendam et tenendam toto tempore uite mee.

to explain its purpose. It is preceded by a grant from Robert of Cary, lord of Lovington, of the advowson of the church of Lovington, together with a hide or 160 acres of land. It is followed by Bishop Reginald's confirmation of that gift to the church of Wells. Where it appears the second time (f. 61) it is again followed by Bishop Reginald's confirmation of Robert of Cary's grant (which itself has not been repeated); and then by Alured de Punsot's grant of the neighbouring church of Barewe (i.e. South Barrow, two miles south of Lovington) to St. Andrew and the common fund of Wells, so soon as the church shall fall vacant.

That Nicholas of Barewe's grant is entered twice is due to the fact that just before its second entry the first hand of the chartulary (c. 1332) has ended its work, and the new and nearly contemporary scribe has made several mistakes of repetition; but we may be grateful to him in this case for having given us a more accurate text of the charter and its attestation. We may note that both scribes quite independently considered that Nicholas of Barewe's surrender of his life-interest ought to be placed before Bishop Reginald's confirmation of Robert of Cary's grant of the church of Lovington.

We have seen that Alured de Punsot's grant of Barewe (made about 1188) contained a clause saving the right of the existing incumbent of the benefice. Such saving clauses are frequently found in charters which grant churches: other examples at this period are Lideford under Bishop Robert; Hengstridge, Brunfeld, Scaldeford under Bishop Reginald; Pilton under Bishop Savary. There is no saving clause in the Lovington grant, though there had been in the grant of the neighbouring Barewe. There may have been other reasons for the omission, but it is easily explained if Nicholas of Barewe's surrender of his interest could be immediately counted upon. This consideration taken in conjunction with the fact that his

Continuation of note from page 5.

reddendo inde annuatim (mihi) unum aureum uel duos solidos in festo beati Michaelis. Hanc autem concessionem meam iuravi me fideliter obseruaturum in capitulo apud Kari; et quod nunquam per me nec per consilium meum predicta communa uel canonici de predicta ecclesia de Luuinton ab aliquo uexabuntur. quod ut ratum sit presenti scripto et sigilli mei

appositione roborauit: hiis testibus, A. succentore Wellensi, W. vic' Arch' Well', Iterio, Thoma de Cicestria, Michael de Aldizeford, A. capellano, et multis alijs.

On f. 38 (Cal. 1, 41) is another copy, headed in rubric *Item de eodem. cxxxij*: the previous charter being headed *Carta Roberti de Cary*. Here *mibi* is added after *annuatim*. (Cf. note at Cal. 1, 70).

charter is in both places in the chartulary placed immediately before Bishop Reginald's confirmation charter makes it *prima facie* probable that the reference to the laudable structure of the rising church must be dated before Bishop Reginald's death at the end of 1191.

When we turn to test this provisional conclusion by the names of the attesting witnesses, we find the evidence indecisive. Three of them attest together an institution to the church of Binegar, made by Alexander the dean, apparently *sede vacante* (1192)¹; viz. Adam the succentor, Thomas de Cicestria and A. the chaplain (for doubtless Adam Magot the chaplain is meant). Of the other three, Iterius had been a canon since 1188 at least²; W. vice-archdeacon of Wells and Michael of Alford are not to be traced elsewhere. Accordingly we know of no reason why these six persons should not have attested a charter together in 1191. On the other hand, the three canons mentioned took part in the election of Bishop Jocelin at the beginning of 1206³, and we have no evidence to show that the other three witnesses were not living at that time.

We are therefore thrown back on the general considerations which have led us to regard the earlier date as the more probable; and, when we read this charter together with those of Bishop Reginald and Master Alexander, we may be ready to allow that there was time enough in the intervening years for such progress in the work as would justify a reference to 'the laudable structure of the rising church' in 1191.

The episcopate of Bishop Savary (1192-1205) was a stormy one, and the bishop was not often at Wells. But this would not seriously affect the work of building, the responsibility for which was in other hands. It is a mistake to suppose that the building of a cathedral church depended mainly on the bishops of the see. The generosity of a particular bishop would stimulate activity, and a vigorous and well-informed prelate might practically determine the character and scope of the work. But the administration of the available funds and the control of the workmen lay with the dean and chapter. The Wells documents tell us but little of Dean Richard—nothing in fact that connects

¹ R. i, 101b (Cal. i, 135).

² Cf. R. i, 24 (Cal. i, 25).

³ Church *ut supra* pp. 403 f., from Charters 39, 40, 41 (Cal. ii, 554 f.).

him with the new work, save that under his guidance the chapter had agreed in 1186 to tax their prebends, and that certain of the canons were charged with the application of the funds to the building. On the other hand we do happen to know that this same Dean Richard was honoured in after times at Evesham Abbey as having been a chief promoter of the completion of the nave and cloister which took place under Abbot Adam (1160-91).¹ We may therefore credit him with at the least an intelligent zeal in the new undertaking at Wells. His successor Alexander had already as a canon shown his eagerness in promoting the work, and we may be confident that as dean he would press it forward as fast as the newly replenished coffers of the chapter would allow.

That the work did not stop after Bishop Reginald's death is no mere surmise. We have a charter of one Martin de Karscumbe (Croscombe near Wells) giving three marks of silver towards the construction of 'the new work,' and two marks towards the repair of St. Mary's chapel (next the cloister); to be paid by instalments commencing 'at Michaelmas next in the second year after the coronation of our lord the king at Winchester.' Richard I was solemnly crowned afresh, after his release from captivity, at Winchester on 17 April 1194: the Michaelmas of the second year after this was Michaelmas 1195.²

¹ *Chron. Evesb.* (Rolls Ser.), pp. 101 f.: 'Clastrum etiam, quod Mauricius et Reginaldus abbates pro parte fecerant, et navis ecclesiae, cum adjutorio decani de Welles maxime, et aliorum bonorum virorum, ejus [sc. Adami] tempore perfecta sunt . . . ejus tamen tempore fuit Ricardus decanus de Welles; qui acquisivit redditum quindecim marcarum de ecclesia de Ambresleia [v. l. Ombresleye] ad opera ecclesiae istius, et optimas confirmationes earundem; et qui fecit aulam quae nunc est abbatis. iste enim decanus pensionem ecclesiae de Baddebi et quosdam alios redditus acquisivit; unde cereus ante magnum altare et corpora sanctorum perenniter ardens appositus est. cujus etiam maxime auxilio et ecclesia et ornamenta et omnia predicta perfecta sunt.'

² R. i, 41b (Cal. i, 48): 'clix. *Carta de Karscumbe*. Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit Martinus de Karscumbe (*sic*) salutem. Noverit universitas vestra quod ego Martinus dedi deo et ecclesie beati Andree in Well', pro

salute anime mee et animarum an(te)cessorum meorum, tres marcas argenti ad constructionem novi operis, et duas marcas ad emendacionem capelle beate Marie ejusdem loci; accipiendas de redditu de Maperton quem dominus meus H. de Novo Merchato mihi in solucionem debiti mei assignavit et in carta nostra [vel vestra] confirmavit. Singulis autem annis daturus sum predicte ecclesie xvj sol. in quatuor terminis, videlicet ad festum sancti Michaelis iiij^{or} sol. . . . donec prescripte quinque marce persolvantur. primos vero iiij^{or} sol. reddam ad festum sancti Michaelis proximo venturum, anno secundo post coronacionem domini regis apud Wintoniam. et ut hec donacio firma pesmaneat et inconcussa ea(m) sigilli mei appositione roboravi. Hiis testibus: Baldwino capellano, etc.' The chapel of St. Mary here referred to is the old Lady Chapel 'juxta claustrum.' Maperton and North Cadbury were of the barony of Henry Newmarch, who was succeeded (6 John) by James his brother: Collinson, *Hist. of Somerset*, ii, 66.

Again, on 10 September 1205 K. John issued a charter at Bristol whereby he granted a market every Wednesday at North Curry.¹ This grant was obtained for the building of the church (*ad opus ecclesiae Wellensis*) by William de Wrotham, who gave the king a palfrey for his goodwill.² Bishop Savary had died abroad on 8 August 1205, but the news of his death may not yet have arrived: in November however the temporalities of the see were in the custody of Hugh de Welles archdeacon of Wells and William de Wrotham archdeacon of Taunton.³

Before we leave Bishop Savary we may note a charter of his which has an indirect bearing on the question of the early existence of a Lady Chapel at the east end of the church. About the year 1203 Bishop Savary instituted a daily mass of the Blessed Virgin, in order as he says that her commemoration may be continual in the church of Wells.⁴ May we take this to imply that some portion of the new church was already available for use, and that it contained an altar dedicated to our Lady? We may add that on Ash-Wednesday 1207 Bishop Jocelin, following in his predecessor's steps, made a statute for a mass of the Blessed Virgin daily in the church of Wells, and for matins and other hours of the Virgin before her altar.⁵

That there was a Lady Chapel, and not merely a Lady Altar, at the east end of the church in the latter part of the thirteenth century is placed beyond a doubt by a grant made in 1279 by the executors of Bishop William Bitton II, which expressly mentions both the chapel of the Virgin by the cloister and the chapel of the Virgin behind the high altar.⁶ Now in 1271 the bishop just named made an ordinance for the payment of a chaplain to celebrate mass daily for the soul of his uncle Bishop William Bitton I at St. Mary's altar 'where his body lies.'⁷ As this bishop's remains actually rest in the Lady Chapel of to-day, it seems reasonable to suppose that their original resting place in 1264 was the earlier Lady Chapel behind the high altar.

¹ R. i, 9 (Cal. i, 6).

² *Rotuli de Finibus*, p. 319, membr. 11: 'William de Wrotham debet j palefridum pro habendo quodam mercato qualibet die Mercurii in septimana apud Norcurry *ad opus ecclesie Wellensis*; ita tamen quod mercatum

illud non sit ad nocumentum vicinorum mercatorum'.

³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.* 7 Joh.

⁴ R. i, 46b (Cal. i, 53).

⁵ R. iii, 128b (Cal. i, 377).

⁶ R. i, 62 (Cal. i, 71).

⁷ R. iii, 124 (Cal. i, 376).

Before this date there seems to be nothing in our documents to guide us in the matter.

In the preceding pages we have endeavoured to learn what we can from documentary evidence as to the building of the church before the accession of Bishop Jocelin² in 1206. But it is necessary at this point to notice two charters of his time which have been regarded as throwing some light on this earlier period.

(1) By a charter which is attested by Hugh archdeacon of Wells, and must be dated between 1206 and 1209, Bishop Jocelin confirms the gift by Nicholas of Wells of his site and dwelling-house, 'before the great gate of the canons,' to be in the future a canon's house in perpetuity; and the bishop grants to the site thus given the same exemptions as are enjoyed by the ancient sites of the canons.¹ Nicholas was a canon at the time of Jocelin's election, and his name stands near the end of the list. He was doubtless a relation of Hugh and Jocelin,² and like them he found his way into the king's chancery; for the Close Rolls show us writs issued 'per Nicholaum de Welles' on 7 February 1206 and 8 May 1208. It would seem that his house stood outside the great gate of the close of that time, and that when he gave it to be a canon's house the bishop granted that it should be reckoned as part of the Liberty. This is the natural interpretation of the transaction. But hitherto it has been generally assumed that the 'magna porta canonicorum' was the North Porch of the

¹ R. i, 19b (Cal. i, 18) '*Carta domini J. episcopi de domibus Nichol' de Well'*. Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quas presens carta pervenerit Jocelinus dei gracia Bathonie episcopus salutem in domino. Cum dilectus filius Nicholaus de Well' deo et ecclesie beati Andree de Well' et nobis et successoribus nostris dederit et carta sua confirmaverit aream suam et domos de Well' ante magnam portam canonicorum, statuimus quod de ipsa area cum domibus sicut de aliis canonicorum domibus imperpetuum ordinetur: videlicet ut semper in posterum per nos et successores nostros iuri canonico assignetur, et libera sit ab omni exactione et servicio seculari, sicut antequam aree canonicorum esse noscuntur. quod ut perpetuum obtineat firmitatem, presentem cartam tam nostro quam capituli nostri sigillo duximus roborandam. hiis testibus, Hugone archidiacono Well', etc.

² '*Carta Nicholai de domibus suis in Well'*.

Universis Christi fidelibus ad quos presens carta pervenerit Nicholaus de Well' salutem in domino. Noverit universitas vestra me divini amoris intuitu dedisse deo et ecclesie beati Andree de Well', et venerabili patri meo J. dei gracia Bathonie episcopo et successoribus suis ejusdem loci episcopis, aream cum domibus meis ante magnam portam canonicorum, ut idem episcopus et successores sui post dicessum meum de eis sicut de aliis domibus canonicorum Well' ordinant (sic) et disponant; et quod episcopus sive capitulum easdem domos sive aream ab ecclesia sua potestatem non habeant alienandi, quin semper uni canonico assignetur. et ut hoc imperpetuum ratum sit et firmum, huic carte mee sigillum meum apposui. hiis testibus, etc.'

² He may indeed have been Jocelin's son, by a marriage previous to his promotion to the episcopate: cf. '*venerabili patri meo*' in his grant (not '*patri et domino*').

church itself, which has in consequence been regarded as belonging to a period anterior to Jocelin's episcopate. This porch however would more properly be described as 'ostium boreale' or 'septentrionale.' Accordingly we are not justified in using this charter as affording any evidence as to the building of the church itself.

(2) On 17 October 1242, just a month before his death (19 Nov.), Bishop Jocelin in conjunction with the dean and chapter made an elaborate ordinance for the increase of the daily commons. In the preamble to this document, after declaring that since his promotion to the episcopate he had taken special pains to enrich and adorn the church committed to his care, he says more particularly: 'The church of St. Andrew of Wells, which was in peril of ruin by reason of its antiquity, we began to build and enlarge.' He adds that by God's grace he had got so far as to consecrate it; and, inasmuch as those who build churches, must not only think of their building and consecration, but also of due provision for those who minister in them, he proceeds to recite what he has done in this behalf and what further he now proposes to do.¹

It was doubtless in reliance on this document that 'the Canon of Wells,' who wrote about the year 1410, said that Bishop Jocelin pulled down the ruinous church and built it again from the pavement.² He would have been better

¹ R. i, 51 (Cal. i, 60). 'Omnibus Christi fidelibus presens scriptum visuris vel audituris Jocelinus dei gracia Bathoniensis episcopus salutem in domino. Postquam ad episcopatus officium nos promoveri permisit altissimus, omne studium adhibuimus et adhuc adhibemus ut cultus divini nominis et decus ecclesie nobis commisse temporibus nostris cumuletur et ampliatur, quicquid ad ad dispositionem, utilitatem et ornatum ipsius respicit semper cogitantes et ad effectum pro viribus nostris deducere festinantes. ecclesiam sancti Andree Wellensis, que periculum ruine patiebatur pre sui (sic) vetustate, cui domino Jesu Christo salvatore nostro permittente presidemus, ipsius auxilium invocantes, edificare cepimus et ampliare; in qua de sola sui gracia adeo proficimus quod ipsam divinis precibus et sacris unctionibus, cum altaribus, vasis vestibusque et reliquis ad divinum cultum explendum in eadem, devote sollempniterque consecravimus. et quoniam ecclesias edificantibus non solum de edificio ipsiusque consecratione cogitandum est, verum etiam

de ministrantium alimentis,' etc. The phrase 'de sola sui gracia adeo proficimus quod ipsam . . . consecravimus' means 'we so far succeeded in our purpose (or 'made such progress') that we were able to consecrate the church.' This says nothing about *finishing* the work—though it implies that nothing was wanting to its full use for purposes of worship. He had put it in sound working order and consecrated it: he felt he had done what duty in this respect demanded, and that he must now not fail in a further duty, which was to make better provision for its ministers. The statement may well mean that all inside work was properly finished off; but it leaves us quite free to suppose that the external ornamentation of the west front was still being carried forward.

² R. iii, 299b (*Historia Major*, printed in Som. Record Soc. vol. 39, p. 65): 'ipsamque Wellensem ecclesiam, vetustatis ruinis enormiter deformatam, prostravit et a pavimentis erexit, dedicavitque eam . . .'

advised if he had restricted himself to the more sober statement of his predecessor, who writing in Bishop Harewell's time (c. 1370) gives what is probably a true tradition, saying that Bishop Jocelin 'built the greater part of the church towards the west.'¹ At any rate we are justified in interpreting Bishop Jocelin's somewhat rhetorical preamble by the tradition of the fourteenth century as to what his work actually was. It is not conceivable that the 'novum opus' spoken of in 1195 should have been in danger of falling from old age in Bishop Jocelin's time. It is quite possible, however, that the new work had not proceeded very far, that only the eastern parts of it were covered in, and that a large part of the older church may still have stood in a dilapidated condition on the site of the present nave.

If now we ask when Bishop Jocelin's active interest in the work upon the church may be supposed to have begun, we must first correct a misapprehension as to the date of his exile in France, which is found in all modern writers and is apparently due to an erroneous or ambiguous statement of Roger de Wendover.² Jocelin was not one of the bishops who fled from England after having proclaimed the Interdict on 22 or 23 March 1208. On the contrary, both he and his brother Hugh were constantly engaged in the king's business for the next year and a half. His temporalities, forfeited for a moment, were restored on 10 April; and on 16 September the king was himself at Wells, which he visited again on 6 July in the following year. At the end of August 1209 Jocelin and Hugh, now the 'elect of Lincoln,' were the king's representatives at a conference held at Dover, and vainly attempted to negotiate a settlement. But in October 1209 the personal excommunication of the king rendered it impossible for the two brothers to continue in his service any longer.

Jocelin had been consecrated on Trinity Sunday, 3 May 1206, and for the next three years and a half he was high in the king's favour. He was bishop of Bath. The

¹ R. iii, 296 (ibid. p. 55): 'ipsamque ecclesiam a parte occidentali pro majore parte erexit'. This is from what is called the *Historia Minor* which Wharton (*Anglia Sacra*, i, 564) unfortunately used only in part to supplement the *Historia Major*. The

consequence has been that these important words have been overlooked.

² For what here follows see the essay on 'Bishop Jocelin and the Interdict' in *Som. Historical Essays*.

share of Glastonbury, which Bishop Savary had held as abbot, was placed in the custody of himself and his brother Hugh, until the pope should have decided whether the abbey should cease to be held with the bishopric. He had already determined to make Wells his chief seat of residence, and had obtained the king's leave to divert the road leading to Shepton Mallet in order to improve his park. There is every reason for supposing that he would from the first encourage the chapter to continue their work upon the church. The one glimpse which our documents give us of the exiled brothers in France shows that the building of the church of their native city was not out of mind. The first will of Bishop Hugh was made near Bordeaux, 13 November 1212, just six months before their return to England. It contains a bequest of 300 marks (at least £3,000 of pre-war value) to the fabric of the church of Wells.¹

How far the progress of the work at Wells was affected by the Interdict it is impossible to say. This is really part of a larger question, which remains at present in complete obscurity, as to what actual effects the Interdict had. It was practically neglected by the laity, and indeed by many of the clergy; and it is doubtful whether anywhere it was very seriously attended to except by the monasteries. The chroniclers seem hardly to tell us more than what its effects must have been, assuming that its canonical prohibitions were really carried out. The one thing it certainly did was to make K. John very angry, so that he confiscated all church properties without distinction, but gave back about half of them almost at once. Bishop Jocelin, as we have seen, recovered his rights within three weeks, but he lost them again on his retirement to France eighteen months afterwards. Our chapter documents give us no help, but the Close Rolls show that our properties were formally restored to us on 17 March 1213, some months before the bishop's return. Whether the progress of the building had suffered much or little during the nominal administration of a royal bailiff is a question which in the absence of any

¹ R. iii, 249 (Cal. i, 432): ' . . . ad hec lego ad fabricam ecclesie Wellensis CCC marchas; et ad communam ecclesie ipsius augmentandam, tam ad opus vicariorum quam canonicorum CCC marcas; et XL marcas distribuendas vicariis ecclesie mem-

orate. Actum apud sanctum Martinum de Garenn', in die sancti Bricii, pontificatus mei anno tercio, presentibus domino J. Bathoniensi episcopo . . . ' The list of those who were present includes the name of Master Helias de Derham.

clear break in the work itself must remain beyond the possibility of an answer.

The bishops were invited to return on 24 March 1213. Jocelin's temporalities were restored on 1 June; and on 12 December he, like the other bishops, received 15,000 marks by way of compensation from the king. He now, for the first time, assumed the double title of Bath and Glastonbury; but in 1219 he gave up all claim to the abbey, receiving certain of its manors in return. Although the negotiations regarding the status of Glastonbury must have involved considerable expense to both parties in the controversy, it is not likely that building operations either there or at Wells would be brought to a standstill, though progress at the abbey at any rate might be somewhat slow.

The references to the building of the church in Bishop Jocelin's time are surprisingly few. There are three royal grants recorded in the Close Rolls: on 7 August 1220 K. Henry III grants '60 great oaks (*grossa robora*) in our woods of Cheddar to make a kiln (*rogum*) for the work of the church of Wells'; on 15 April 1224 a penny a day from Congresbury towards the work for five years from 9 April; and on 3 October 1224 five marks yearly for twelve years for the same purpose. We may note that the high altar is mentioned in a charter of 15 August 1233, and the altar of St. Calixtus in another of 26 March 1238.¹ The church was consecrated on 23 October 1239.²

The date of consecration is no sure guide by itself as to the time when a church was finished. At a council held in London in 1237 a decree of the legate Otto ordered that all churches which needed consecration should receive it within two years; and Matthew Paris tells us that as a result the churches of Ramsey and Peterborough among others were consecrated in 1238, and those of Abingdon, Wells, Evesham, Tewkesbury, Pershore, and many more followed suit in 1239.³ It may be no more than a coincidence that Wells was consecrated in this particular year: yet the bishop may have been glad to show that he

¹ R. i, 214b (Cal. i, 253), R. iii, 131b (Cal. i, 379).

² R. i, 50b (Cal. i, 59): 'on St. Romanus' day in November 1239.' But the Dedication feast was held on St. Romanus' day, 23

October. A confusion has arisen owing to the common writing of this date as '10 Kal. Novembr.' See *Som. Mediaeval Calendars* in *Som. Rec. Soc.*, vol. 42, p. 164.

³ *Rolls Ser.* iii, 421, 517, 638.

was prompt in the fulfilment of a duty which elsewhere had been too long neglected. That the west end of the nave had actually been reached and closed in is rendered practically certain by the mention of the west doors of the church in a charter of four years later which we are now to consider.

An ordinance passed in chapter on 9 July 1243, seven months after Bishop Jocelin's death, is important as making reference to the cloister and certain doors of the church. It is prescribed that resident canons may be buried in the cloister, beginning at 'the door of the church towards the south,' as near as can be done, and extending to the angle of the cloister, and so onward. Vicars are to be buried in the cemetery towards the east, behind the chapel of St. Mary: lay-folk in the cemetery towards the west, beginning near the elms and extending westwards; but no layman is henceforward to be buried 'before the doors of the church towards the west.'¹

It is interesting to learn that there was a cloister, and that in its walks the burials of canons were to take place. It is not made clear which is 'the door of the church towards the south,' from which the burials are to begin; but it is most likely that the door leading from the south transept is meant.

We are fortunate in having preserved to us the name of a master-mason of Bishop Jocelin's time, Master Adam Lok (or Lock) *caementarius*. In September 1229, with consent of the executors of his will, his house in Wells was sold by his widow and son to Roger of Chewton, a chaplain of Bishop Jocelin's. Among the witnesses of the documents relating to the sale we find the names of two other masons (*caementarii*), Deodatus and Thomas Noreis.² It is further of great interest to note that one document is attested by Master Elyas de Derham, steward of Bishop Jocelin; we have already noted his presence with Bishops Jocelin and Hugh when they were in exile in France seventeen years before.

¹ R. i, 64b (Cal. i, 73).

² R. i, 34 (Cal. i, 35 f.), and Charters 23, 30 (Cal. ii, 550 f.).

Note on the Fall of the 'Tholus' in 1248.

As some importance has been attached to the fall of the 'tholus' by reason of an earthquake on 21 Dec. 1248, and in particular to the statement of Matthew Paris that more damage was done to the capitals of the columns than to their bases, it is necessary to examine the evidence somewhat closely. The story is told twice: first in the *Chronica Majora*, and then again in the abbreviation of this by the author himself in what is called the *Historia Anglorum* or the *Historia Minor*. The special interest which Matthew Paris had in earthquakes may be illustrated by his account of the earthquake in the Chilterns which occurred two years later, on 13 Dec. 1250. After expressing surprise that there should be an earthquake at all where the land was so firm and free from caverns, and after describing the terrifying character of the subterraneous thunder, he proceeds: 'sed et hoc mirabile simul cum terrae motu contigit', namely that the birds of all sorts flew about madly as though a hawk were hovering in their neighbourhood, and only returned to their accustomed nests and trees when the horror of the earthquake was at an end. This is in the *Chronica Majora* (Rolls ser. v, 187); but in the *Historia Anglorum* this passage about the birds disappears: probably on second thoughts it had not seemed quite so astonishing an occurrence. The earthquake of 1248, on the contrary, appears in rather a fuller form in the later of his two accounts of it. The passages are here set side by side: the variants in the second account are italicised.

Chronica Majora v, 46.

Eodemque anno in Adventu Domini, scilicet quarto die ante Natale Domini, factus [est] terrae motus in Anglia, ita ut, prout haec scribenti enarravit episcopus Bathoniensis, quia in ejus diocesi evenit, dissipatae sunt maceriae aedificiorum, et lapides de locis suis avulsi in muris hiatus fecerunt patulos et rimas cum ruinis.

Tholus quoque lapideus, magnae quantitatis et ponderis, qui per diligentiam caementariorum in summitate ecclesiae de Welles ponebatur, raptus de loco suo, non sine dampno super ecclesiam cecidit; et cum ab alto rueret, tumultum reddens horribilem, audientibus timorem incussit non minimum.

In quo etiam terrae motu hoc accidit mirabile. Caminorum, propugnaculorum et columpnarum capitella et summitates

Historia Anglorum iii, 42.

Eodemque anno, quarta die ante Natale Domini, factus est terrae motus in Anglia, ita ut, *secundum domini episcopi Bathoniensis, in cujus diocesi magis evenit, assertionem*, dissipatae sunt maceriae aedificiorum, et lapides de locis suis avulsi in muris hiatus patulos fecerunt et *ruinas*.

Tolus quoque lapideus, magnae quantitatis et ponderis, qui per diligentiam caementariorum in summitate ecclesiae de Welles *ad decorem* ponebatur, raptus de loco suo, non sine dampno *fabricae culminis* cecidit; et cum ab alto rueret, tumultum reddens horribilem, audientibus timorem incussit non minimum.

In quo etiam terrae motu hoc accidit mirabile. Caminorum, propugnaculorum et columpnarum capitella et summitates *cum epistiliis*

Chronica Majora v. 46.

commotae sunt, bases vero et fundamenta

nequaquam : cum contrarium naturaliter debuit evenire.

Historia Anglorum iii, 42.

commotae sunt, bases vero et fundamenta, *cum partibus inferioribus*, nequaquam : cum contrarium *potius* naturaliter, *ut videtur*, debuit evenire, *cum terra motum talem, non aer turbinem, pateretur*.

It will be seen from these texts that the notion that certain of the capitals of the piers at Wells had to be renewed in consequence of this earthquake finds no support in the narrative. Matthew Paris merely expresses astonishment that the earthquake should have damaged the tops rather than the bottoms of various structures : chimneys and battlements, for example, and the capitals of columns. It is not a profound remark, and apparently he afterwards felt that he must explain his surprise : so he adds in the later form of the narrative that a high wind rather than an earthquake might be expected to produce results of this kind. We may therefore dismiss the idea that the fall of the 'tholus' was accompanied by any damage to the capitals of the piers in the church.

But we have to ask, what was the 'tholus' ? and what was the extent of the damage done by its fall ? The word 'tholus', both in Greek (*ἡ θολος*) and Latin, signifies a dome. But in medieval Latin its use is more widely extended. It is used, for example, in connexion with the vaulting under the central tower of St. Canice's cathedral at Kilkenny, said to have been erected by Bp. Hacket about 1465 : 'tholum campanilis et [*leg. e*] tecto surgentis concameravit lapidea fornice David Hacketus' (*De Ossor. diocesi*, Cod. Clar. li. 4796). But the word had a special use in connexion with a cross set up as an external ornament. Thus Ducange quotes the '*Liber miraculorum S. Bertini*, cap. 3, apud Mabillonium,' of a bell-tower : 'cum tholus pomifer in edito unacum triumphali signo crucis erigeretur'. So again Victor Mortet in his *Textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture en France*, p. 74, n. 3, cites Hugh of St. Victor's *Speculum de mysteriis ecclesiae*, c. 1 : 'Virga ferrea in qua gallus sedet . . . tholus super quem crux ponitur'; cf. p. 317 : 'gallum qui super turri erat, crucem columque aut dispergit aut cremat'; where it is clear that 'tolumque' should be read, as also in the *Vetus Glossarium* 'San-German. MS. num. 501' (Ducange), *Colum, fastigium templi rotundum*.

The 'tholus' at Wells was being erected 'in summitate ecclesiae' for an ornamental purpose ('ad decorem'). Its fall damaged the roof. It is clear therefore that the word is not here used of a vault. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a stone ball or some other ornamental terminal is intended, designed possibly to carry a cross. If the central tower did not at that time rise much above the level of the roofs, as is most probable, the 'tholus' in question may have been on one of the ends of the transept, or at the eastern or western extremity of the church : the words 'in summitate ecclesiae' do not help us to decide the point. But in any case the mischief caused by its fall would not be likely to necessitate any considerable repair to the interior of the building.

ON THE REBUILDING AT GLASTONBURY AFTER THE FIRE
OF 1184

Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, died on 9 August 1171. He had been abbot of Glastonbury for forty-five years, and had added much to its property and magnificence. While the abbey was in the king's hands, a period of rather more than a year and a half, it brought in over £500 to the royal purse after necessary expenses had been paid. About Easter 1173, as we gather from the Pipe Rolls, a new abbot was appointed. This was Robert, who had been prior of Winchester. Adam of Domerham appears to put Robert's accession in 1171: but it may be that this is a mere error of editing, the date having been misplaced. John of Glastonbury gives no date at this point; but he follows Adam of Domerham in making Abbot Robert's rule last seven years.¹ The Pipe Roll confirms this reckoning; for it shows that the abbey fell vacant again about Easter 1180. For the next two years it was in the charge of John Cumin, who also held the archdeaconry of Bath; and it brought in a total sum of nearly £900. John Cumin had meanwhile been appointed to the archbishopric of Dublin, and his account for the half year from Easter to Michaelmas 1182 was rendered by deputies. Two points in this account deserve notice. A sum of £80 is paid out of the Glastonbury revenues to Ralph fitz Stephen for the sustenance of the brethren of the Charterhouse at Witham, and a further sum of £60 for their building work. The interest of this lies in the fact that Ralph fitz Stephen was shortly to be in charge of the new buildings at Glastonbury. Again, £25 is paid out to 'the chamberlain of Cluny.' This is the first appearance on the scene of Peter de Marci, to whom on John Cumin's consecration as archbishop (21 Mar. 1182) the king gave the custody of the abbey.

Adam of Domerham says that Peter de Marci was chosen because he had a brother at the papal court, who was supremely influential and could arrange certain projects there in which the king was much concerned. He gives the title of 'Albaignensis' to this bishop: but John of Glastonbury calls him 'Albanensis,' and this perhaps is right: for Henry, the cardinal bishop of Albano, had been abbot of Clairvaux before his promotion in 1179, and he appears to have refused the papacy after the death of Urban III in 1187.

For some unexplained reason Peter de Marci's accounts do not appear in the Pipe Rolls, though in the Chancellor's Roll for 1182-3 he is briefly stated to have accounted for £279 15s. for the half year from Easter to Michaelmas. He is said to have endeavoured by excessive complacency to win the monks to elect him as their abbot; but his past record was a bad one, and to his misdeeds they afterwards attributed the severe misfortunes which now befell them. On St. Urban's day, 25 May, 1184, the whole monastery was consumed by fire, with the exception of the bell-tower built by Henry of Blois, and the lodging with its chapel built by the late abbot Robert, in which last the monks now took refuge. Abbot Henry's magnificent buildings and the

¹ Adam of Domerham (ed. Hearne), ii, 331 f.; John of Glastonbury (ed. Hearne) i, 172 f.

church itself were reduced, says the chronicler, to a heap of ashes. The death of the ill-starred Peter de Marci quickly followed in the same year.¹

King Henry with exceptional generosity committed the abbey to Ralph fitz Stephen, his chamberlain, with instructions to spend its whole revenues, after providing for the monks, upon the work of rebuilding. John of Glastonbury calls the new custodian son of King Stephen; but the Pipe Rolls show this to be an error. Two entries, in which sums are accounted for as paid to him for buildings at Witham, describe him as Ralph son of Stephen the Chamberlain²; and Stephen the Chamberlain appears elsewhere in these rolls.³ Ralph was honest, zealous and efficient; and the monks had nothing but praise for his treatment of themselves. As to the rebuilding, he lost no time in applying to it the great wealth which was at his disposal. 'The church

¹ Adam of Domerham, ii, 332 f: 'Orbata suo pastore, ut dictum est, Glastoniensis ecclesia in manus Henrici secundi regis devoluta est per plures annos. evolutis aliquot annis negocia quaedam in curia Romana habebat expedienda. de oportunitate nuncii praemeditans idoneum repperit, Petrum videlicet de Marci, camerarium Cluniacensem, qui per fratrem suum Alhaignensem^a episcopum, tunc in praedicta curia tam opere quam sermone potentissimum, quae postularet facilius impetraret. sciens autem munera omnes allicere, memoratae saepius abbaciae tunc vacantis eidem Petro custodiam commisit. qui Glastoniam contendens, et unanimiter a conventu in abbatem eligi desiderans, benignum se monachis et liberalem exhibebat, muneribus et promissis eos sibi in quantum potuit concilians. set, quia viris religiosissimis et probatissimis dudum sunt assueti, in eum consentire nequibant; eo quod dicebatur in partibus suis in detrimentum ecclesiae suae castrum obfirmasse; eidem etiam irregularitatis obicientes elogium, quamplures homines propter eum occisos se audisse dicebant. Petrus autem crimen hoc falso fuisse objectum manifestare volens et qualitercumque oblitare, die natalis domini proximo sequentis^b in aurora, duobus tantum monachis sibi familiaribus astantibus, in vetusta ecclesia se divina celebrare simulavit; duobus tamen monachis, ecclesiae custodibus, illum divina temerantem sacramenta cementibus et aliis nuntiantibus. cumque pro tanto vicio necessaria fuisset reconciliatio antequam divinarum repeteretur consecratio, et id dissimulare monachorum devocio, tam forte vetera quam nova peccata superna plectebat ultio. in aestate enim sequenti, die videlicet sancti Urbani, totum monasterium, praeter cameram cum sua capella a Roberto abbate constructam, in qua monachi postea sese receperunt, et praeter campanarium ab Henrico episcopo constructum, consumpsit incendium. aedi-

ficiorum ab eodem H. nuper erectorum speciositas, locus omnibus venerabilis, ecclesia tot sanctorum obumbraculum in tumultum cineris rediguntur. . . . post haec etiam mors supradicti Petri velociter est secuta anno M^o C^o lxxxiiij^o.

'Henricus itaque secundus, rex Angliae, tantae monachorum Glastoniensium compassus calamitati, memoratam abbaciam cuidam camerario suo, Radulfo filio Stephani,^c commisit, ea condicione ut monachos competenter exhibens totum residuum de redditibus in aedificis reparandis et ecclesiae construenda effunderet. qui cum esset vir in commisso fidelis, in agendis omnibus strenuus, in morum honestate praeclarus, Glastoniamque magno veneretur affectu, jussa regia studiose pariter et devote prosequi satagebat. in primis enim conventum et suos servientes secundum approbatam monasterii consuetudinem competenter exhibens et honeste, etiam quaedam de sua munificencia grateranter adjecit. . . . ecclesiam sanctae Mariae, in loco quo primitus vetusta steterat, ex lapidibus quadris opere speciosissimo consummavit, nichil ornatus in ea praetermittens^d: officinas omnes reparavit; ecclesiae demum speciosissimae fundamenta jaciens, longitudinem in CCCC pedes, latitudinem in octoginta extendit. operi quidem non segniters insistens sumptibus non pepercit; quodque minus habebat de Glastonia, manus regia supplebat. in hujus ecclesiae fundamento ponebantur lapides tam magni palatii ab Henrico constructi quam totius muri curiam cingentis. erigens itaque magnam ecclesiae partem, residuum eleganter consummasset, si dominus vitam regis protelasset.'

^a *Joh. Glaston*: 'Albanensem'; ^b *sequenti*; ^c *filio regis Stephani*; ^d *quam dedicavit Reginaldus tunc Bathoniae episcopus, anno domini millesimo centesimo octogesimo circiter sexto, die sancti Barnabae.*

² Pipe Roll for 1183-4.

³ Pipe Rolls for 1172-3, 1182-3.

of St. Mary, in the place where the Old Church (*vetusta ecclesia*) had originally stood, he completed with squared stones and most beautiful workmanship, omitting no kind of ornamentation. He repaired all the monastic buildings; and, finally, laying the foundations of a most beautiful church, he extended it to the length of 400 feet, and the breadth of 80 feet. He pressed forward the work with energy, and spared no cost: what Glastonbury could not find, the royal bounty supplied. In the foundation of this church were placed the stones of Abbot Henry's great palace and of the whole of the wall surrounding the court. Accordingly he erected great part of the church, and would have completed the rest in comely fashion, had the Lord prolonged the king's life.¹

This statement is repeated by John of Glastonbury (c. 1390), who adds to it that 'the church of St. Mary was consecrated by Reginald, then bishop of Bath, on St. Barnabas' day (11 June), about the year 1186.' The dedication day would be kept in memory; the year may be a surmise of the writer, who would know that Bishop Reginald died in 1191. We must not press the word 'finally' (*demum*) in Adam of Domerham's narrative, written c. 1280, to mean that the great church was not begun until the Lady Chapel was finished and the monastic offices repaired: it need signify no more than a rhetorical climax. What is important to note in the statement that considerable progress was made with the main church before the death of K. Henry, 6 July 1189. So far as the resources available are concerned, there is no reason to question this. The abbey revenues had steadily improved under the king's custodians, and more than £500 a year was at Ralph's disposal. This means that in the five years of his stewardship something like £50,000 of pre-war value could be spent on the new buildings. Canterbury, which can hardly have had such wealth to dispose of, had just rebuilt its great choir with the crypt beneath in a period of ten years. We may find some confirmation of Adam of Domerham's statement when in 1215 Thomas the prior in a letter to K. John pleads the goodwill shown by his father, K. Henry, 'who rebuilt the church of Glastonbury from its foundations, and left it to you to be completed'.¹

The chronicler proceeds to tell us that K. Richard, being intent on his wars, had no care for the building of Glastonbury, and so the work ceased as there was no one to pay the workmen.² This must be an exaggeration. No doubt the accession of K. Richard reversed the financial position. The king was in sore need of money for the Crusade, and was selling offices to the highest bidder. The new abbot, Henry de Sully, though his nephew, probably came in with a heavy debt upon him: and it may be true that 'he lent no helping hand to the work that had lately been begun.' But there were other

¹ Adam de Dom. II, 446: 'patri vestro, qui eam a fundamentis reaedificavit, et vobis consummandam reliquit'.

² *Ibid.* 340 f. 'Radulfus filius Stephani supra memoratus in fata concedens Glastoniae tumultus est, ubi meritis exigentibus erit in memoria sempiterna. Ricardus igitur comes, filius ejusdem [sc. Henrici], sublimatus in regnum rebus bellicis animum dirigens ab aedificatione ecclesiae nuper inceptae studium divertit. quapropter ab opere cessatum, eo quod non esset

qui laborantibus stipendia conferret. idem rex annitente conventu praefecit in abbatem Henricum de Soliaco, priorem de Bermundesie, virum de regia stirpe progenitum . . . (p. 351) Idem autem abbas operi nuper incepto manum nequaquam porrigebat auxiliarem. quapropter monachi de fabrica solliciti, praedicatores per provincias cum reliquiis et diversorum pontificum indulgentiis dirigentes, ex hiis quae caritative impendebantur opus utcunque sustentare nitebantur.'

sources of supply, familiar to the monastic builders of those days. Bishop Reginald, himself engaged on a similar undertaking at Wells, declared by a charter that he had 'granted to Henry the venerable abbot of Glastonbury and the convent that from their churches they should receive and have the annual pensions here following.' After grants to the sacristy, the almonry, the infirmary and other offices, we find no less than ten churches put under contribution 'to the work of the church of Glastonbury,' to the extent of eight marks and two hundred shillings in all, i.e. nearly three hundred pounds *per annum* of our money.¹ Moreover the timely discovery of royal and saintly remains must have greatly increased the offerings of pilgrims; and we are expressly told that 'the monks being anxious concerning the fabric, sent out preachers through the provinces, who took with them relics and indulgences, to gather the alms of the faithful for the continuance of the work.'²

But the monks had soon a fresh trouble upon them of a far more serious kind. Bishop Reginald was elected to Canterbury in November 1191, and died a month afterwards. At the close of 1193 Bishop Savary his successor at Wells entered upon his long struggle for the possession of the abbey, from which he had got Abbot Henry de Sully removed by promotion to the see of Worcester. It was now nine years and a half since the great fire, and we may fairly suppose that the church, of which a considerable part had been built by Ralph fitz Stephen, was already in use, though much may have remained to be done as regards the nave and the towers. The narrative of the conflict with Bishop Savary fully bears this out. There is no reference made to the stoppage of building: on the contrary, when certain envoys of the bishop arrived and sought for the prior, we are told that they could find only the subprior, who was discovered with two monks 'in the new work of the monastery.'³ On other occasions we hear of 'the church of the Blessed Mary,' and the chapel of the infirmary⁴; but most of the incidents described take place in 'the church of Glastonbury.' Thus, on Whitsunday 1199, Bishop Savary presented himself at Glastonbury for his enthronement by the archdeacon of Canterbury: when the monks refused to admit him, 'he had the doors forced and the locks of the church and the treasury broken by a smith, took out the vestments of the church, indecently caused the canons of Wells and other secular persons to be robed in them, and so was brought in procession into the church of Glastonbury; about eight of the monks met him, traitors to their church, and in their presence he was enthroned.' We are not dependent for this story on the chronicler alone; for its main points are given in a letter of the convent written shortly after the event, which describes how the bishop 'violated the church, and in the same church, eight monks only meeting him, allowed himself most irregularly to be

¹ *Ibid.* 349. 'Omnibus Christi fidelibus etc. Reginaldus, etc. . . . nos concessisse Henrico venerabili abbati Glastoniensi . . . ut de ecclesiis suis . . . subscriptas percipiant et habeant pensiones . . . ad sacristarium suam de ecclesia sancti Johannis Glastoniae sex marcas . . . ad cantarium . . . ad mederium . . . ad elemosinarium . . . ad infirmarium . . . ad opus ecclesiae Glastoniensis de ecclesia de Mereling c solidos; de ecclesia de Wrington xl solidos, de ecclesia de Dichesgate iii marcas, de ecclesia de Badecumbe xx

solidos, de ecclesia de Estpennard unam marcum, de ecclesia de Melnes xx solidos. de ecclesia de Budecleie xx solidos, de ecclesia de Muneaton ij marcas, de ecclesia de Estbrente unam marcum, de ecclesia de Limpelesham unam marcum.' [A.D. 1190-1.]

² See last note but one.

³ Adam de Dom. ii, 368 (Feb. 1197): 'in novo opere monasterii.'

⁴ *Ibid.* 368, 377.

enthroned.¹ The same letter recounts how on the last day of June the bishop's agents had come upon certain of the refractory monks who were sitting in white robes at the altar of God and Holy Cross,² and had dragged them violently away and imprisoned them at Wells. If all this had taken place in the Lady Chapel and not in the great church, we surely should have been told so.

It is in harmony with this view that when, on Bishop Savary's death in 1205, the abbey made a new effort to regain its freedom, and obtained letters to the pope from the king, the nobles of England, the chapters of Wells and Salisbury, three monasteries and a bishop, all pleading their cause, the poverty of the abbey and its resulting inability to supply the needs of the poor and the pilgrims should be dwelt upon, but not a word should be said of their still lacking a church in which their services could be duly performed.³ Fourteen years more were to pass before the monks got an abbot of their own. The building of the nave doubtless went on by slow degrees. It is deserving of remark that Abbot Michael, who ruled from 1235 to 1253, and is recorded to have 'surpassed all his predecessors in the construction of buildings' and to have 'left not a spot in the abbey without some token of his magnificence,' seems to have found nothing wanting to the fabric of his church, though he presented two silver dishes for the high altar and various costly vestments⁴.

John of Glastonbury records the dedication of the church under Abbot Geoffrey Fromunde (1303-1322).⁵ To his successor, Walter of Taunton, who died after a month's rule in Jan. 1323, he ascribes the erection of a *pulpitum*, or rood-screen, with ten images, and of the rood with St. Mary and St. John.⁶ Lastly, he assigns to his successor, Adam of Sudbury, the vaulting of the chief part of the nave, and its decoration with paintings.⁷

¹ *Ibid.* 382, 391.

² *Ibid.* 392: 'ad altare dei et sanctae crucis.'

³ *Ibid.* 425-436.

⁴ *Ibid.* 504: 'in aedificiis construendis omnes antecessores suos supergrediens, nullum pene locum abbacie magnificencie suae reliquit expertem'; 517, 'duas pelves argenteas ad ministerium majoris altaris.'

⁵ John of Glaston. I, 255: 'Idem abbas fecit conventualem ecclesiam Glastoniae dedicari.'

⁶ *Ibid.* 260: 'Hic construxit pulpitum ecclesiae cum decem ymaginibus, et erexit crucem cum ymaginibus, Crucifixo, Maria et Johanne.'

⁷ *Ibid.* 263: 'Navem ecclesiae pro maxima parte voltavit, splendidisque ornavit picturis.'

Additional notes on the building of the church of Glastonbury.

(1) Adam of Dom. II 400. Innocent III, giving further instruction to the bishop of Ely and the abbot of St. Edmund's as to the settlement between Bishop Savary and Glastonbury, says: 'Quia vero, ubi ad hospitalitatem et elemosinam per monachos faciendam competentes mandavimus redditus deputari, de fabrica ecclesie et aedificatione domorum nihil expressimus, quibus eadem Glastoniensis ecclesia maxime noscitur indigere, volumus' etc. [4 Sep. 1200]. They reported that for all purposes, including 'ad fabricam ecclesiae restaurandam,' it should suffice that the monks should have the altar oblations and about £600 in rents (*ibid.* 418); and it was settled accordingly that 'omnes oblationes altarium Glastoniensis ecclesiae ad fabricam ejusdem ecclesiae integre pertinebunt' (*ibid.* 422) [24 Sep. 1202].

(2) Among the 'beneficia' of Abbot William [1219-23]: church of Muneaton to the almonry, 'salvis tamen duabii marcis magistro operum Glastoniae singulis annis de eadem ecclesia: concessit eciam magistro operum xx solidos de ecclesia de Budeclege' (*ibid.* 477).

(3) Cal. of Papal Letters I: 1255, 10 Kal. Nov. License to abbot and convent of Glastonbury to convert to the building fund of their church, destroyed by fire, the proceeds of the benefices of their patronage for one year after their voidance. A reason had to be given for so undesirable a procedure, and the fire of seventy years ago was held good enough. A modest parallel is to be found in Pope John XXII's grant to Westminster of the appropriation of Longdon in 1330, to console the monks after their great fire of 1298.