

ART. XXII.—*A Monk of Furness.* BY THE REV. T. LEES.

Read at Furness, August 16, 1877.

TO the labours of the Benedictines in their *Scriptoria* the world owes nearly all that it now possesses of classical and patristic lore. To the Cistercian order, an off-shoot of the Benedictines, England owes in a very great measure the rise of its woollen trade. The time devoted by the Benedictines to *learned*, the Cistercians spent in *manual* labour, and more especially in the breeding and tending of sheep. Hence the sites of Cistercian abbeys were not chosen for beauty or shelter of situation, but for their suitability towards the rearing of their numerous flocks. Dr. Pauli has pointed out these facts in his most interesting essay on “Monks and Mendicant Friars,” and then goes on to say, “In England, no less than in France and Germany, the severity and simplicity of their rule may be traced in the very ruins of their monastic buildings. Even the chronicles which were compiled in Cistercian monasteries have a dry matter-of-fact style about them, while the Benedictines wrote, even at that early period: with elegance, although certainly with much less attention to truth.” The justness of the learned Doctor’s first remark, my paper on “Certain Stones at Calder and Furness” fully proves; and I now wish to bring before you a very singular exception to the truth contained in his second. Jocelin, a monk of Furness, who flourished during the latter half of the twelfth and the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and who is supposed by Tanner to have been a Welshman, was a noted Hagiologist, and produced lives of St. Mungo, or Kentigern, St. Patrick, St. Waltheof, and other saints; and most wonderful

derful legends he managed to put together, the substratum of fact in each life being ingeniously hidden under a marvellous superstructure of fiction. Jocelin also wrote, Stowe states in his "Survey of London," a treatise "De Britonum Episcopis." Jocelin's life of St. Kentigern has been edited, along with a biography of St. Ninian, by the late lamented Bishop Forbes, in the fifth volume of "The Historians of Scotland;" and the late Dr. Stevenson, Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh, printed for private distribution, in 1872, "The Legends and Commemorative Celebrations of St. Kentigern, his friends and disciples: translated from the Aberdeen Breviary and the Arbuthnot Missal." To these two valuable additions to mediæval literature I beg to acknowledge my obligation for the substance of this paper. In his "Prologue" Jocelin tells us that he undertook the compilation of the life of Kentigern at the request of his namesake, Jocelin, Bishop of Glasgow; and that he had wandered through the streets and lanes of the city, according to the bishop's command, seeking the saint's recorded life, "if, perchance, such might, be found, which, with greater authority, with more evident truth, and with more cultivated style, might be composed, than that which the Church useth;" and, as the result of his search, he found a "little volume written in the Scotie dialect, filled from end to end with solecisms, but containing at greater length the life and acts of the holy Bishop." Discontented with the barbarous language and the heresy contained in this book, he set to work to produce from the old materials, with sundry additions, a new biography; and, "So far as I might, and by thy command, season, (he says) what had been composed in a barbarous way, with Roman salt." One of Jocelin's stories took such hold on the popular mind, that to this day its pictured memorial forms a portion of the seals both of the See and City of Glasgow. In the arms of both, a fish figures holding a ring in its mouth:
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and this device is known to have formed a portion of the armorial ensigns of Glasgow ever since A.D. 1325. The story runs thus:—Rederech, King of Glasgow, tired out with hunting, retreated with one of his soldiers for repose to a shady place on the banks of the Clyde. The soldier fell asleep, and then Rederech discovered on his finger a ring he had given to Languoreth his queen. Controlling his jealous anger for the time, the king plucked off the ring without rousing the sleeper, and flung it into the river. Then returning home he commanded his queen to produce the ring. She, in her fear and perplexity, betook herself to Bishop Kentigern, and on her repentance, he commanded a man to go with a hook down to the river, and bring the first fish he caught. This was done, and the fish (pike or salmon is a disputed point) being gutted, the ring was found in its entrails, and the queen thus delivered from her dilemma. In the Sequence to the Mass of St. Kentigern in the Arbutnot Missal, this circumstance is thus commemorated:—

“Mœcha moerens confortatur,
Regi reconciliatur,
Dum in fluctu qui jactatur
Piscis profert annulum.”

Now this story of the recovery of a ring by means of a fish is at least 900 years older than the times of Kentigern, and probably had existed nearly 2,000 years before Jocelin thought proper to embed it in his book. As some of us must remember, Herodotus tells it of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos; and the Talmudists relate a similar story of King Solomon. The French have it in their charming tale, “The Fair One with the Golden Locks,” and it is found in the old Provençal Romance of “Magelone.” The Yorkshire man sings it in the ballad of “The Fish and the Ring, or the Cruel Knight and the Fortunate Farmer’s daughter.” Peter Damian tells it of Arnulph, the grandfather of Charlemagne.

Charlemagne. But the question is, whence did Jocelin get it? Was it a folk-lore tale common in his day? It is not likely that he derived it from Herodotus or the Talmud, for his knowledge, like that of the rest of the world at the end of the 12th century, of Greek would be "nil," and of Hebrew, if possible, even less. For a long time this question puzzled me, till at last I came on what I believe is the true solution; *i.e.* that he had read it, probably within the walls of Furness, in the works of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, who tells, in chapter 8 of the xxii book of his "De Civitate Dei," the story of the relief of a man from poverty by thus finding a ring, and ascribes the merit of the man's deliverance to the "Twenty Martyrs of Hippo." Bishop Forbes observes that Joceline "appears to have been very familiar with the Magna Moralia of St. Gregory the great." About 1185, Jocelin undertook a life of St. Patrick at the request of Thomas, Archbishop of Armagh, Bishop Malachias, and John de Courcy; but, says the Rev. S. B. Gould, in his preface to the life of that saint, "it is of little historical value compared with the earlier and more authentic sources of information, which it not unfrequently contradicts on the authority of some idle legend." In writing the life of St. Waltheof, Jocelin dealt with matters nearer his own time and connected with his own Order. Waltheof's mother Maude, grandniece of the Conqueror, after the death of her first husband, Simon of Senlis, was married to David, King of Scotland: and Waltheof spent his early life in the Scottish Court. Afterwards he became a Canon-regular, and was elected prior of Kirkham in Yorkshire; and Jocelin relates a miraculous vision which happened to him there, on the authority of Jordan, a fellow monk of Furness. Influenced by Ælred, Abbot of Rievaulx, Waltheof took the Cistercian habit and became eventually, A.D. 1147, Abbot of Melrose. One of Jocelin's anecdotes of St. Waltheof which I give from the Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," as
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it brings us back to our own district, will, I hope, be deemed a suitable termination to this short account of one whose labours, both of brain and body, were, nearly 700 years ago, accomplished within these sacred precincts. "Master Everard, first Abbey of Holme Cultram, told me that one day as he was travelling with this man of God, a horsefly sat on Waltheof's neck or hand, and he kept on flapping it away with his sleeves, but the fly incessantly returned. At last, giving a more violent slap, he killed it. Then clambering down from his horse, Waltheof flung himself prostrate by the dead fly, before the Abbot, and confessed his sin in having killed a creature of God, which he was unable to restore to life again. The Abbot smiled, and gave him a very light penance. But he lamented more for the murder of the gadfly than many do for effusion of human blood."
