

## DOMUS ANACHORITÆ, ALDRINGTON.

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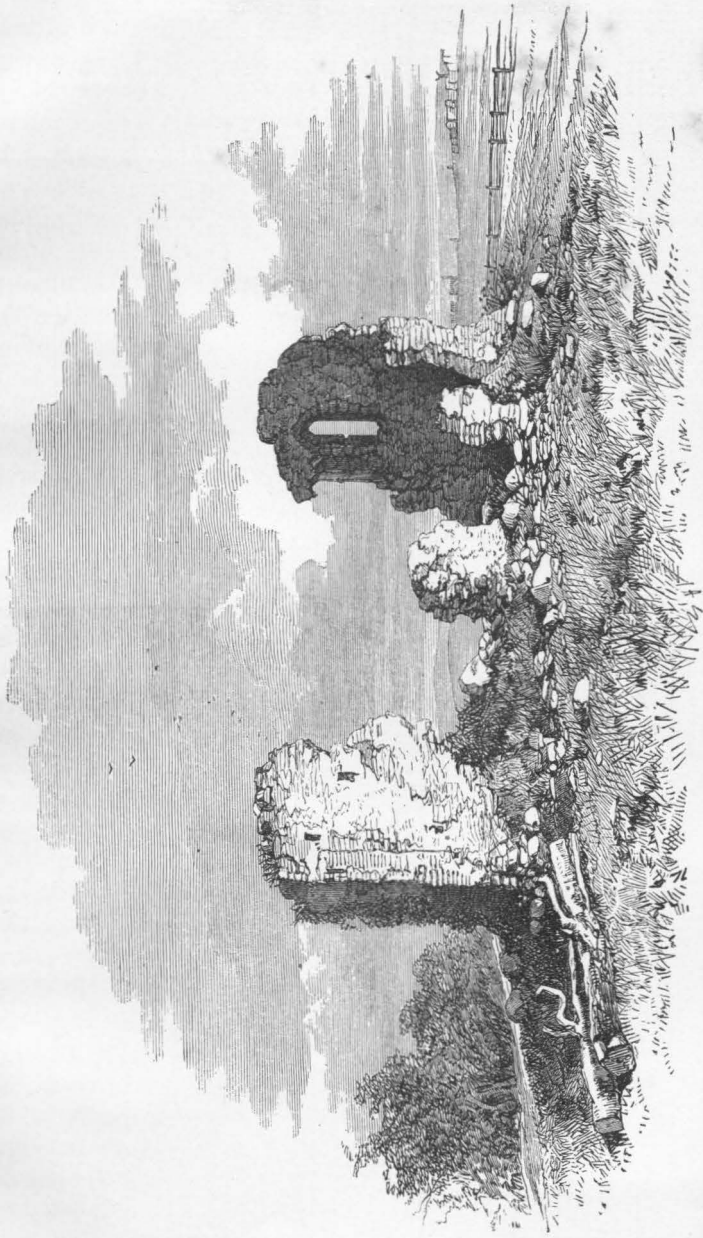
BEFORE I enter on the subject of this Anchorage, and of Recluseriums generally, I must say a few words on the history of Aldrington itself; for who, that has no other knowledge of the parish than that which he has obtained from its present desolated appearance, and its proximity to the fast-increasing and fashionable watering-place, Brighton, and to that part of the South Coast Railway which lies between this town and Shoreham, would for one moment suppose that it could ever have been so situated, as to have possessed the requisite qualifications for a *Domus Anachoritæ*. And yet this was the case. An anchorite once selected it for his place of residence, as we learn from the *Episcopal Registers*, at Chichester, which tell us, that in the year 1402, the then rector of the parish applied for and obtained, the Bishop's license to enable him to establish himself as an anchorite here; and in doing so, he doubtless found in it at that time all the loneliness and quietude his pious heart could pant after, or his most ardent wishes desire.

Let us then see, what the respective positions of Aldrington and Brighton were at this early period. From the most authentic sources of information open to us, we learn that they were very different from what they now are. Brighton, in 1402, being "a poore fishing village" only, standing, for the most part, under the cliff; whilst Aldrington, which was about three miles distant from it, had a considerable population: nor is it too much to say, that as long as Aldrington was a seaport, Brighton was mainly indebted to it for its welfare and prosperity. Even so late as the commencement of the last century, though much reduced in population, it is stated still to have had two hundred inhabitants, or more, who occupied a row of houses near the sea. The authors of *Magna Britannia*, state, that in early times Aldrington possessed a very considerable village; but that in 1738, the year in which this

book was published, few of the houses remained, the greater part of them having been destroyed, as is supposed, during the memorable storms of 1703<sup>1</sup> and 1705. This part of the Sussex coast, too, had another powerful enemy to contend with. It had very early begun to suffer from sea encroachments, the *Nonæ* return estimating the loss of land thus sustained, in the three contiguous parishes of Hove, Aldrington, and Portslade, at very nearly 300 acres. And Budgen, in his *Survey of Sussex*, published in 1724, shows that these inroads had not then wholly ceased. For opposite to Aldrington he makes the following remark:—"It appears by an inscription at Hove parsonage," where, or in what way made he does not state, "that in the year 1699, the sea had gained on that coast six perches." While Brighton then has, for the last two centuries, gone on rapidly increasing in size, until its present resident population exceeds 60,000, and its number of churches is somewhat in proportion, Aldrington, on which it was once dependent, has continued to decrease, until it has become, as we now see it, a parish without either house or church.

At what time the church was suffered to fall into its present state of ruin, we have no certain information to show; but it was probably as late as the middle of the last century, when, as its houses had all disappeared, and it was left without an inhabitant, a church would be no longer required. In 1724, the parsonage was the only house remaining. In 1690, it appears to have had no poor of its own to relieve; as at one of the Quarter Sessions held at Lewes some time during that year, the parishes of Aldrington, Patcham, Hangleton, Blatchington, and Ovingdean, which were all of them of small extent, were ordered by the Justices there assembled, to assist Brighton in the support of her poor; the reason assigned being, that the town was at that time suffering partly from the inroads of the sea, and partly from the distress brought upon it by foreign and intestine commotions. At the present time, Aldrington contributes towards the relief of the Portslade poor. So small is the parish, that it consists of two farms only, comprising together about 720 acres, of which about two-thirds belong to the representatives of the late Hugh Fuller, Esq., of Portslade, and the other third to the Dowager Lady Amherst.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante* p. 55, Note 1.



ALDRINGTON CHURCH, IN RUINS.

The patronage of the living, which has become a complete sinecure, is now vested in Magdalen College, Cambridge. Upon a vacancy taking place, and a fresh incumbent being appointed, he goes through the ceremony of "reading in," (as the performance of the full morning and evening services of our liturgy, and the reading the thirty-nine articles of the church, and making the customary declarations required by the Statute, are technically called,) mounted on the heap of stones, which, from the continued decay of the edifice, has greatly accumulated on its site, a ceremonial of not very frequent occurrence; and which, therefore, when it does take place, usually attracts a large congregation from the neighbouring parishes. The church was dedicated to St. Leonard; and all that now remains of it are portions of its eastern, western, and southern walls. Judging from what can now be traced of its form, it was a structure of the simplest kind. That it had a western tower is manifest from the parts of its walls which still remain; and it had probably a nave and chancel, between which there could not have been, in outward appearance at least, the usual distinction; the corresponding height of the east and west ends plainly indicating that the roof must have been straight throughout its whole length. At the east end were two small pointed arch windows, one of which only remains perfect; but from which we are able to determine that the church was erected some time during the thirteenth century. The church of the adjoining parish of Blatchington, also in ruins, has the same, except that they are round-headed, showing it to be of a rather earlier date. That Aldrington church had a Lady chapel attached to it, we learn from the Bishop's license; for it was to a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, having communication with the church, that the occupant of the *Domus Anachoritæ* was privileged by it to have free ingress and egress at all times. I have met with no other mention of this chapel. The church stands near the western boundary of the parish, and quite at the extremity of the Lewes rape; its distance from the sea being about half a mile. It is one of the three parishes which, from the time of the Conquest, have constituted the Hundred of Fishergate; Portslade and Hangleton being the other two.

Of the earlier history of Aldrington but little is known. In Roman times, the *Portus Adurni* of the *Notitia Provinciarum*, one of the two great ports of the county, is supposed by Camden, Stillingfleet, and some other historians, to have been here; and that it was on this account chosen as a fit station for the *Exploratores*, destined to repress the incursions of pirates infesting it. In confirmation of which conjecture, the pottery and other Roman remains occasionally found here, and in the immediate neighbourhood, have been adduced. Portslade, too, is supposed to have derived its name from its being situated on the lade, or trackway, leading from the northern parts of the county to this port. Of these Roman remains, the most remarkable was a station opened in the year 1818, by that indefatigable archæologist, Mr. Douglas, the author of the *Nænia Britannica*, in the parish of Blatchington, which he supposes to be the ruins of a *Mansio ad Portum Adurni*, or residence of the præfect, or chief officer of the port, called *Comes Pitoris Saxonici*, and which he considers of great weight and importance, in finally deciding the *Portus Adurni* to be identical with the ancient mouth of the river Adur, to which this *mansio* was directly opposite; and which, situated as it was upon the high ground to the north, it completely overlooked. That this mouth was at Aldrington, does not admit of doubt; ample evidence of a river of considerable depth having once run parallel with the sea, between it and Kingston, everywhere manifesting itself in forming the new ship canal eastward of Shoreham harbour.

In the *Norman Survey*, Aldrington is called Eldritune; and in ancient deeds and documents, Aldertone, Aldington, Alrington, and Ederington. At the time this survey was taken, the manor in which it was situated was in the hands of a tenant, under William de Warren; and though in the rape of Lewes, a part of it was in the manor of Beeding, in the rape of Bramber. To this manor the advowson of the living appears from the *Tower Records* to have been some time appendant, and to have passed with it. Not to mention any other lords, we find from the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, that in the time of Henry III. it was vested with other property in the neighbourhood, in Hubert de Burgh, Justiciary of England, who obtained it by marriage with Beatrix de Warren; and



that he gave the church, together with that of Portslade, to the canons of the Premonstratensian Abbey of St. Radigund, of Bradsole, in Polton, near Dover, which was founded, according to Tanner, by Jeffrey and Thomas, Earls of Perth, and others; but according to Leland, by Hugh, a canon, and its first abbot (Tanner's statement being the correct one), for the sustenance of themselves and the pilgrims journeying that way.<sup>1</sup> Horsfield states, that at the time of the general dissolution of religious houses, the church of Aldrington belonged to the priory of St. Pancras, Lewes; and was then given to Thomas, Lord Cromwell, but it is not included in this king's valuation of the property and possessions belonging at that time to this priory; nor in any list of the churches in their patronage. On a reference to the patent of the grant to Cromwell, it appears that Aldrington is not among the rectories or vicarages belonging to St. Pancras, but is to be found among the general words referring to hospitals, tithes, oblations, &c., in various parishes.<sup>2</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the monks of St. Pancras had some property here (though not the church); as they had also, "at Estfield *juxta* Aldrington," in 1392, "a portion of the tithes of lambs, wool, and cheese."

We now come to the history of the *Domus Anachoritæ*, Aldrington, the more immediate object of my paper. It appears, as I have already stated, from the *Registers* of the diocese of Chichester, that in the year 1402, Thomas Bolle, "chaplain," as he is called, and "rector of the parish of Aldrington," petitioned the bishop for a license to construct a cell near to the parish church, in which to pass in solitude the remainder of his days, and to devote himself to the life of an anchorite; which petition his lordship was pleased to grant. Of his previous history we know nothing more than the little which is set forth in the petition and license. From his being called a chaplain, we may infer that before he became the rector of Aldrington, he had been a canon of St. Radigund.

We learn from Mosheim, Fosbrooke, the compilers of the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, and other writers on monastic subjects, that the Religious Order of Anchorites was one of very great antiquity; and that it had reference in the early primi-

<sup>1</sup> It may have been the subject of the arbitration at South Malling, between the Prior of Lewes and Abbot of St. Radegund,

in 1261. See *Suss. Arch. Coll.* III. p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> *Rot. Pat.* 29 Hen. VIII. p. 2, m. 14.

tive church to monks, who were so called from their habit of withdrawing themselves from society (*ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναχωρεῖν*) for the better performance of some of the severer religious duties, and from their living in private cells, apart from the world. Of this order were the first founders of Monachism in Egypt and Palestine; some of whom lived in caves hollowed out of rocks, such as those which I have described in my Uckfield paper, as still to be found at Buxted and Hastings. Of this kind, St. Chrisostom tells us, were the monks of Mount Casius, near Antioch; while others lived in little tents and huts of the rudest structure. These were called Hermits. Others were shut up in small cells, and these were called Anchorites, or Recluses. The former order were of much greater antiquity than the latter.

This order, which was very prevalent in the days of the venerable Bede, was one distinguished for the great severity of its observances. At its first establishment, they who professed it were driven to frequent the wildest and most inaccessible deserts, often to avoid some impending persecution, where they debarred themselves the use of a covering of any kind; from which circumstance they derived the name of hermits. Shelter, either by night or day, was not consistent with the strictness of their rule; and for nourishment, they depended entirely upon roots and herbs, and other spontaneous productions of the earth. They were seldom stationary, their life being spent in wandering about from place to place, without having any fixed abode; reposing at night wherever the darkness might happen to overtake them, and spending their time in fasting, meditation, and prayer.

Such was the life of a hermit previous to the Norman Conquest. But after the introduction of the Norman Rule, the severity of their discipline was much relaxed; and we find them, instead of *avoiding, drawing near* to towns, probably for the sake of the alms and benefactions, which they were thus enabled the more readily to obtain. Hermitages were often near to the gates or posterns of cities and towns. There was a hermitage at Chichester near to the western gate or postal of that city, which was called the Hermitage of St. Cyriac, a saint of whose history I have no knowledge. A subterraneous passage running from this postern for some distance

under the city walls is supposed to have been connected with this cell. The hermit occupying it is mentioned in the *Register* of Bishop Robert Rede, as having had granted to him by this bishop in 1304 the privilege of selling an indulgence of forty days to such benefactors, as might contribute towards the repairs of his chapel or oratory.<sup>1</sup> Of the original foundation of this hermitage we have no account. Hermits were divided into nine different orders, each of which was designated after the rule the professors of it followed; as the Hermits of St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Cyriac, St. Paul, &c.

The mode of life practised by the Order of Anachorites, or as they are now more commonly called Anchorites, or Recluses, was in many respects very similar to that observed by Hermits, though they were a totally distinct class from them, and were guided by wholly different rules and regulations. Their principal difference lay in this, that while Hermits avoided the abodes of men, Anchorites lived in chambers or cells usually attached to some part of a church, or in a separate building in a churchyard. Hermits too, wandered about, whilst Anchorites passed their whole life in cells, which they never left. Each was admitted to his class by a separate service, the one being called the *Benedictio Heremitarum*, the other, the *Servitium Anachoritarum*, or *Includendorum*. To the latter service I shall have occasion again to refer presently.

From two papers, one on the subject of *Domus inclusi*, or habitable chambers found in many of our churches, read by Mr. M. H. Bloxam before the Lincolnshire Diocesan Society, in the year 1853; and the other on *the Remains of Penitential Cells*, read by Archdeacon Churton at a general meeting of the Yorkshire Architectural Society, in the same year, we obtain many interesting particulars connected with the order of anchorites. The custom for holy men to submit themselves to be shut up in private cells that they might be enabled to devote themselves without fear of interruption to a self-denying and contemplative life, and to offer vows to God, appears from these papers to have prevailed in France as early as 541 of the Christian æra, and to have been introduced generally into this country sometime between the years 589 and 1115. It commenced by certain abbeyes selecting some

<sup>1</sup> See, also, the *Hermitage of Westbourne*, ante p. 80, Note 1.



member of their establishment, who appeared to them to be the best qualified for such a life by his superior advancement in religious attainments, and who was willing to resign himself up to the patient endurance of those austerities, which would be the necessary consequence of his doing so; and then shutting him up apart from the other members, that he might for the remainder of his life, indulge without distraction in the contemplation of heavenly things. The building in which he was included, and which was called a *Recluserium*, was generally situated at a short distance from a monastery; some religious houses, and more particularly nunneries, having many such buildings belonging to them. For, strange as it may appear, females were among the earliest of those that gave themselves up to this state of total retirement and seclusion from the world.

The cells constructed for the use of these monks and nuns, before they became a separate religious order, were at first erected, as I have just said, around the monastery: but after they had established themselves as a distinct class, they no longer confined themselves to the precincts of the convents, but, for the greater facility of practising religious exercises, dwelt in cells attached to parish churches, or erected in some part of the churchyard. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and perhaps earlier, the greater part of them were, like that of our Aldrington Anchorite, attached to the church, and placed in such a position as to enable the recluse to see the altar, and hear the service when it was performed. The doors of these cells were kept constantly closed, and were locked upon their inmates, so that admission into them, or escape from them, became impossible, after the anchorite was once inclosed. In some instances they were walled up like a tower; the only means of communication with the inmates in that case being by a kind of garret window, through which food was passed to them, and they received the Holy Communion when it was administered in the church. In Bavaria, according to Radér's *Rules for Solitaries*, the cell of the anchorite was required to be of stone, and twelve feet square. It was to have three windows, one commanding a view of the chancel, through which to convey the eucharistic elements to the recluse; the second was to be opposite to this for the ad-

mission of the necessaries of life ; and the third high up towards the roof, for the purposes of light only. This might be closed in with glass or horn.

No particular part of the church appears to have been prescribed for the erection of these cells. They might be fixed to the nave or chancel at the option of the recluse, provided they had an opening through which a view of the altar might be obtained. And as this was best secured by a cell erected against the chancel wall, they are usually found in this position. This was the situation of the Aldrington Anchorage, and of the greater part of those that Bloxam instances in other counties ; our own county affording us no remains of a cell in any of its churches, that I am aware of, unless the parvises, or rooms occasionally found over church porches, may be so considered. Bloxam thinks that they may ; indeed his opinion is, that they were originally built for this purpose, and in proof of it, he refers to Dickenson's *History of the Cathedral Church of Southwell*, which mentions a room over the porch of the chapel of Holme, still called after the anchoritess, who is supposed to have inhabited it, "Nan Scott's chamber." Rooms, too, may be sometimes traced over ancient vestries, which were, no doubt, originally built for the same purpose ; and sometimes even the vestries themselves will be found, upon examination, to have been ancient cells. Archdeacon Churton speaks of anchorites selecting as their place of seclusion, a loft high up in a steeple tower. In such a position, he says, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, took up his residence, that he might the more readily abstract his mind from the things of this world, and devote his time and attention to divine meditations day and night. And it had this advantage, that when thus mounted high above all mortal things, he seemed, with the angels, to be present at the nearer vision of his Maker.

From the end of the twelfth to the commencement of the sixteenth century, not only had most of the ancient towns in the kingdom anchorages attached to their churches, but Norwich, Coventry, Northampton, and other large places too numerous to mention, were remarkable for the number of their anchorages. Most of them were a part of the fabric of the church ; but a few stood in the churchyard, in which cases the rule was that the anchorage, if the recluse was not walled in

should be in such a position, as to admit of free communication with the church. Mabillon, a celebrated Benedictine writer, and French annalist, mentions under the year 589, many female recluses as dwelling in and about, the church of the Holy Cross belonging to the Abbey of St. Radigund, to which I have already stated the church of Aldrington belonged. And about three centuries later it appears to have been by no means unusual, for pious women of the better class, as they found themselves advancing towards the close of life, to take up their abode as recluses within the precincts of some neighbouring monastery.

That such a severe mode of life might not be adopted hastily and without due consideration—the 41st of the canons of Trullo, ordained in 692, required, that all such as were desirous of passing the life of an Anchorite, should undergo a certain preliminary period of probation; such as confinement for a specified period, which was generally a year or more, to a cell in a monastery. And if, at the expiration of this time, the candidate for seclusion still persisted in wishing to devote himself to the life of a recluse, such wish was to be signified, if he were a monk, to the abbot or prior of the house to which he belonged, who, after the lapse of another year, during which time he was again to associate with his brethren, was then to examine him, and if he found him sincere in his intention to withdraw from the world, he was allowed to do so. But if he was not a monk, two years' probation was to be undergone, and two years' notice given to the bishop; at the expiration of which time, if his lordship was satisfied, inclusion might take place. “Nec oportet quenquam inclusum fieri sine episcopo constitutum, ut ab episcopo, aut ab alio presbitero interrogatur ac moniatur, quatenus ipse devotus suam conscientiam scrutaretur, utrum bonâ aut malâ sanctitate appetit.”<sup>1</sup> The bishop was also farther required to be present at the ceremony of the inclusion; that he might take part in the special service appointed to be used. What this ceremony and this service were, we learn from that part of the Pontifical of Lacy, Bishop of Exeter in the fourteenth century, which has more immediate reference to *Reclusio Machoritarum*, and which corresponds with that used

<sup>1</sup> Harl. MSS., 873, page 18.

in the diocese of Sarum. They were of a religious character, and in many respects resembled those practised with a person on his death-bed. Extreme unction was first administered, and the commendatory prayer for the soul of the recluse next offered up, that he might be prepared for death whenever it might take place; and then a part of the funeral service was read, during which the anchorite was admitted into his cell, and the door closed upon him for ever, by the presiding bishop putting his seal upon it, if the recluse was not walled in; after which the door could not be again opened except a necessity for doing so should arise, such as the dangerous sickness of the recluse, or his being at the point of death. As the anchorage was sometimes spoken of as a sepulchre, and the anchorite, once enclosed, was thenceforward considered as dead—and dead he was, as far as bidding adieu to all earthly things was concerned, might not this have led to the erroneous notion, that, as a punishment, monks and nuns were sometimes buried alive?—a mistaken idea into which the great northern bard has fallen, in common with some other poets and antiquaries, and which he has introduced into the second canto of his *Marmion*.

Nearness to a monastery or city, was another point duly to be considered in fixing upon the site of a *Recluserium*, or *Domus Anachoritæ*; without which the bishop's license might be withheld; the object of such proximity being, the better chance of securing a ready means of subsistence for the anchorite. This requisite must, from some cause or other which does not appear on any of the instruments authorising our Aldrington Anchorite's seclusion, have been dispensed with in his case; probably from his possessing sufficient means of subsistence to satisfy the bishop himself, though this is not stated to have been the case. For the *Domus Anachoritæ* at Aldrington was not near enough to any city or monastery for its recluse to have profited by the hand of charity in this way. In 1402, Brighton was an inconsiderable place; the town of Lewes, and the city of Chichester were too distant to be made available for the supply of gratuitous sustenance; and the nearest monasteries would be Lewes priory to the north-east, and Beeding priory to the north-west; each of which would be eight or ten miles off. For at the time this cell was

licensed, the Carmelite Friars had been driven away from Shoreham by sea encroachments, and had settled themselves at Beeding. Nor could the profits of the living of Aldrington have been any longer made available for his support, though he is still described as the rector; for it appears from the bishop's license that he had resigned the incumbency, previous to his application to the bishop, for his permission to become an anchorite. That upon this important particular, the bishop had in some way satisfied himself, previous to his license being granted, there can be no doubt; because, had he failed to do so, and it should afterwards be found that any recluse so licensed was destitute of the means of living, the bishop licensing him might have been called upon to make good the deficiency.

Two other requisite qualifications for the bishop's license must not be passed by unnoticed. They are, first, the quality of the person desirous of becoming an anchorite, viz., whether he was of a religious or secular order; whether he was clerk or layman; whether he was old or young. Our Aldrington Anchorite having been rector of the parish, was of course a clerk; what his age was does not appear. Secondly, a monk could only become an anchorite by his own free will and choice. The doing so must have been his own unbiased act and deed.

But towards the end of the ninth century, the stringency of the forms and rules previously in force, were considerably modified and relaxed. It was no longer required that cells should be a part of the fabric of the church, but they might be in the churchyard, or even just without the churchyard fence, the only point looked to, being ready access to the church. The anchorite too, was no longer confined to his *domus* or *recluserium*; but as a garden was now often attached to it, he might labour in this for his health and profit. If too, the recluse were a priest, he was allowed to retain the power of confession and absolution; for the exercise of which privilege, a small oratory was added to his cell. Nor were anchorites any longer compelled to pass a solitary life. Many might dwell together in one common enclosure; when so congregated, they were not at first permitted to hold out the right hand of fellowship to each other, and their cells or tents were still directed to be separate, and at a certain distance



one from the other, and each anchorite was required to provide his own daily sustenance, independently of the rest; yet they might communicate with each other, if it became necessary to do so, by means of a window, provided their cells were disunited. The custom for anchorites so to congregate was more practised abroad, than in this country; and instances are recorded of their being employed abroad in missions to the Pope;—but these were of rare occurrence.

The usual dress worn by anchorites was a frock, if they were laymen; and a cape if they were priests. Disciples were sometimes entrusted to their care, to be brought up by them; but they were not allowed to dwell in the same anchorage with them; and after they had passed a certain novitiate, they were obliged to become anchorites themselves.

That this mode of ascetic life was not without its early attendant abuses, is manifest, from the statutes passed by Richard de la Wych, Bishop of Chichester, commonly called St. Richard, in the year 1246, and which are to be found in Wilkins's *Concilia*; in which he enjoins recluses not to receive or entertain any persons in their anchorages, that no untoward suspicions may arise, and to have the windows of their cells, for the same reason, as narrow as they conveniently can be, that no intercourse may take place through them. They were also farther enjoined, to hold no communication, except with persons who were known to be of unblamable character and conduct. And he farther directs the custody of the vestments of the church, not to be entrusted to female recluses, except in cases of necessity.

Bloxam seems to think, that an inspection and examination of the Episcopal *Registers* of the different dioceses throughout the kingdom, would result in much additional light being thrown on this, at present, but little known religious order. What information the *Registers* of other dioceses may contain, I am unable to say, not being acquainted with them; but as far as those of the diocese of Chichester are concerned, I can confidently assert that he is mistaken. I have gone carefully through the whole of them, and have found no allusion to any other anchorage than the one of Aldrington. But this may arise from the existing *Registers* being of rather too late a date to admit of much being found in them bearing on the subject.

It is to be regretted, on many accounts, that all the earlier Chichester Episcopal Records are missing, a few copies of particular deeds only, being preserved. Dugdale, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, gives the license of Roger, Bishop of Coventry, granted in 1362, for the inclusion of an anchorite in that city; being moved, the bishop states, to accede to his request at the instigation of Isabella, Queen of England, and consort of Edward III., who seems to have been a great favourer of this order, and the solitary mode of life which they pursued.

The scantiness of the knowledge we possess with regard to the history of this very ancient religious class, is thus alluded to by Becon in his *Reliques of Rome*, published in 1563, and though the extract is a long one, I make no apology for introducing it, for it bears too closely on the habits and manners of anchorites, and is, in other respects, too interesting to be omitted altogether, or even to be abridged on the present occasion. Speaking on the subject before us, in the quaint language of the period in which he lived, he says—"As touching the Monastical Sect of Recluses, and such as be shutte up within walles, there unto death continually to remayne, giving themselves to the mortification of carnal effectes, to the contemplation of heavenly and spirituall thinges, to abstinence, to prayer, and to such other ghostly exercises, as men dead to the worlde, and havynge their lyfe hidden with Christ, I have not to write, forasmuche, as I cannot hitherto fynde, probably in any author, whence the profession of anchers and anchresses had their begennyng and foundation; although in this behalf I have talked with men of that profession, which could very little or nothing say of the matter." He then goes on to tell us, why, having adopted Judith as their patroness and great exemplar, he considers them wrong in doing so, which leads him to speak disparagingly of their mode of life. "Notwithstanding," he continues, "as the whyte fryers father their order on Helyas, the Prophet (but falsely), so, likewise, do the ankers and ankresses make that holy and virtuous matrone, Judith, their patroness and foundresse. But how unaptly who seeth not? Their profession and religion diffreth as far from the maners of Judith, as light from darknesse, or God from the devill, as it shall manefestly appere to them

that will diligentely conferre the historye of Judith with their lyfe and conversation. Judith made herself a pryvye chamber, where she dwelt (sayth the Scripture), being closed in with her maydens. Our recluses also close themselves within the walles, but they suffer no man to be there with them. Judith wore a smocke of heare, but our recluses are both softly and finely appared. Judith fasted all the dayes of her life, but few excepted. Our recluses eate and drinke at all tymes of the beste, being of the number of them—*Qui curios simulant, et Bacchanalia vivunt.* Judith was a woman of a very good report. Our recluses are reported to be superstitious and idolatrous persons, and such as all good men flye from and avoyde their company. Judith feared the Lord greatly, and lyved according to his holy worde. Our recluses fear the pope, and gladly doe what his pleasure is to command them. Judith lyved of her own substance and goods, putting no man to charge. Our recluses, as persons only borne to consume the good fruites of the erth, live idely of the labour of other men's handes. Judith, when tyme required, came out of her closet to doe good unto others. Our recluses never come out of their lobbeies, sincke or swimme the people. Judith put herselfe in jeopardy for to doe good to the commune countrye. Our recluses are unprofitable cloddes of the erth, doing good to no man. Who seeth not now, how far our ankers and ankresses differe from the maners and lyfe of this virtuous and godly woman, Judith, so that they cannot justly claime her to be their patronesse? Of some idle and superstitious heremite borrowed they their idle and superstitious religion. For who knoweth not, that our recluses have grates of yron in their spelunches and dennes, out of the which they looke, as owles out of an yvye todde, when they will vouchsafe to speake with any man, at whose hand they hope for advantage. So reade we in *Vitis Patrum*, that John the heremite, so inclosed himself in his heremitage, that no person came in unto him; to them that came to visite him, he spake through a windowe onely. Our ankers and ankresses profess nothing but a solitary lyfe in their hallowed houses wherein they are inclosed, wyth the vowe of obedience to the pope, and to their ordinary bishop. Their apparell is indifferent, so it be dissonant from the laity. No kind of meates they are forbidden to eate. At

midnight they are bound to say certain prayers. Their profession is counted to be among all other professions, so hardye, and so streight, that they may by no meanes be suffered to come out of their houses."

But useless, in a public point of view, as the life of an anchorite may for the most part be considered, instances are recorded of their making the fine arts their particular study and employment. Bilfrith, a celebrated Saxon recluse, was, Strutt tells us,<sup>1</sup> the great promoter of the Art of Design in England during the eighth century; and that it is to him we are indebted for the representation of the Evangelists with the symbolical animals over their heads, as they are ascribed to each by the Prophet Ezekiel.<sup>2</sup>

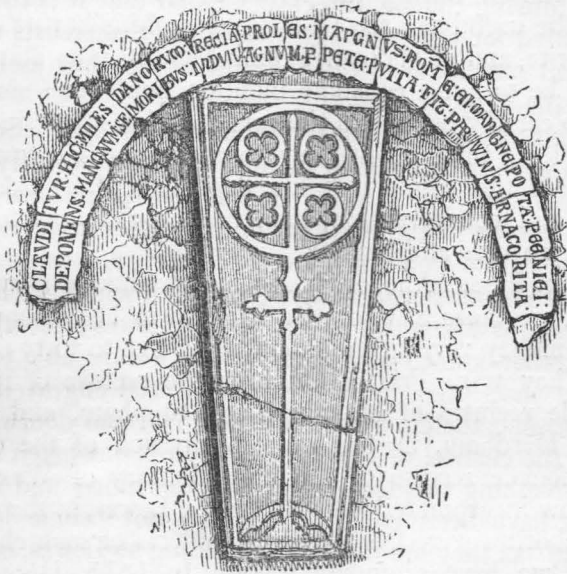
Recluses often lived to a very advanced age. Some are stated to have been shut up in their cells forty or fifty, others sixty or seventy years; while one is recorded to have lived in seclusion the incredible number of ninety-seven years. Their temperate habits would conduce to longevity.

The earliest anchorite in this county, of which we have any information, is Mangnus of St. John's Lewes; of whom we have no other knowledge, than such as we are able to obtain from the inscription which was discovered engraved on the stone, forming the circular arch of the Norman doorway leading into the chancel of the church, when it was taken down in 1587. Nothing was thought of it at the time; and it would probably have been lost for ever, had not "some lovers of antiquity," as they are described, residing in Lewes, of whom, no doubt, that excellent antiquary Mr. Rowe was one, anxious for the preservation of so early and interesting a memorial, collected the stones and placed them in their original form against the south wall of the church, beneath which was subsequently placed the coffin stone, or monumental slab, seen in the annexed engraving, which was found in digging in some part of the churchyard; and was so disposed of under the erroneous impression that it had covered the mortal remains of Mangnus; and for its preservation when the *old* church was entirely pulled down, we are indebted to the zealous exertions of Mr. M. A. Lower, who secured it a place in the *new*.

<sup>1</sup> Strutt's *Manners &c. of the English*, Vol. iii. p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ezekiel* i., 10.

The inscription, which consists of four hexameter lines in Monkish Latin, and Anglo-Saxon character—for where the letters are of a later date, they are interpolations, made probably at the time it was discovered, to fill up vacancies found to exist—and which is, upon the whole, in a tolerably perfect state, a small portion only being missing, is as follows:—  
 “Clauditur hic miles, Danorum regia proles, Mangnus nomen  
 ei, Mangne nota progeniei; Deponens Mangnum, se moribus  
 induit agnum, Prepete pro vitâ, fit parvulus Anachorita.”



From it we learn, that this Mangnus was a knight of some fame, and of the royal race of the Danes; but that becoming disgusted with the world, and all earthly things, the vanity and vexation of which his own unhappy experience had taught him, he retired from society, and became an anchorite.

It will be observed that I have treated this inscription not as an epitaph, in which light only it has heretofore been considered, but as referring solely to the fact of his retiring from the world, and inclusion as an anchorite. Its whole bearing, as well as the force of particular expressions made use of in it, have led me to take this different view of it. “Clauditur,” with which it commences, is, in my judgment, a term much



more applicable to reclusion *during life*, than to confinement in a tomb *after death*. The word "hic," too, in an inscription over a doorway, would seem to point more appropriately to the situation of his cell, than to the place of his burial. The construction which I put upon these two words is, "here is shut in as an anchorite;" and from them I am led to infer, that the situation of Mangnus' cell was just on the outside of this doorway, which would then become his means of access to the church. Placed in such a position, and engraven possibly by himself during the period of his inclusion, it would not only be useful as a record of the fact of his having become an anchorite, and of his own submissiveness in so doing; but it would be to him a constant monitor, how much more conducive to earthly happiness the practice of contentedness and self-denial is, than giving way to strife and envying; how much more the comfort of life depends on the exercise of humility and condescension, than in vain attempts to secure worldly greatness and honour.

The next Sussex Anchorites of which we have any authentic accounts, are those to whom St. Richard in 1242 bequeathed sums of money varying in amount from five to forty shillings each. They were Friar Humphrey the recluse of Pagham, the female recluses of Houghton and Stopham, and the recluse of Hardham, in the western division of the county; and the female recluse of the Blessed Mary of Westoute, a parish now incorporated with St. Ann's, Lewes, in the eastern. That anchorites were frequently the objects of such charitable bequests, we have abundant proof. In 1415, Henry, third Lord Scrope of Masham, made bequests to a considerable number of anchorites residing in different parts of the kingdom; among which our Aldrington anchorite is not to be found. He might, however, have profited by his lordship's beneficence, under the general clause with which this part of his will concludes, viz., "Also I bequeath to every other anchorite and anchoritess that can easily be found within three months after my decease, vjs. viij*d*."

The only remaining Sussex anchorite of whom I can find any notice among our county records, is our Aldrington recluse; Bishop Robert Rede's license for whose inclusion, and the petition of the Dean and Chapter, at whose request the

license was granted, each of which contains many interesting particulars connected with the reclusion of this anchorite, are as follow :—

“ Item, 20<sup>o</sup> die mensis Decembris, in ecclesiâ cathedrali Ciestrensis, Dominus recludit Dominum Willielmum Bolle, capellanum, rectorem ecclesiæ parochialis de Aldryngton, sue diocesis, in quandam habitationem in cemeterio ex parte boreali dicte ecclesie contiguam, ad exercendum in eâdem vitam anachorite et reclusi ad terminum vite sue. Qui renunciavit literas alias per Decanum et Capitulum pro habitatione ibidem ad suum usum construendâ concessas; et habuit novas literas a Domino edificationis facte, et reclusionis faciende ad terminum vite sue, quarum tenores inferius distribuuntur. Qui etiam tunc quandam resignationem de suâ ecclesiâ ob signo et subscriptione magistri Ricardi Swetapule, notarii publici, alias conceptam, et coram ipso exhibitam per ipsum absque aliquali compulsione vel metu interpositam fatebatur voluntarie tunc ibidem, quam Dominus admisit protinus. Tenor vera literarum Decani et Capituli eidem concessarum, et per Dominum revocatarum talis est.

Johannes Maydenhithe, Decanus et Capitulum Ecclesie Ciestrensis, dilecto nobis in Christo Domino, Willielmo Bolle presbitero, salutem in eo, qui est omnium vera salus. Tue devotionis experientia nobis commendata ejusque contumacia Dei gratia habenda, nos inducunt, ut vota tua, que in te firmo et stato, ut credimus, concepto proposito, altissimus inspiravit Deus, et tui coadjutores exinde affecti favoribus et gratiis, quam cum eo poterimus, prosequamur. Tuis igitur in hac parte nobis porrectis precibus favorabiliter inclinati, spatium ejusdem aree in cemeterio dicte ecclesie ex parte boreali ejusdem in latitudine viginti sex pedes in se continentis, juxta quendam locum angularem vacuum, pro habitatione construendâ, in qua relictis curis secularibus, solitarie et anachorite vita Deo perfecte militaturus, perpetuo recludi desideras, una cum ingressu et egressu in capellam Beate Marie eidem loco contiguam, pro divinis inibi celebrandis tibi ad terminum vite tue in usus habitationis, Dei et caritatis intuitu, concedimus per presentes. In cujus rei testimonium sigillum nostrum commune ad causas presentibus est appensum. Datum in domo nostra Capitulari secundo die Mensis Junii, Anno Domini, 1402.”

And then follows the license of the bishop, of which the following is a copy:—

“Omnibus ad quos presentes literas pervenerint, Rober-tus permissione divinâ Cicestrensis Episcopus, salutem in Do-mino sempiternam. Sincere devotionis propositum, et sancte commiserationis exemplum dilecti nobis in Christo Domini Willielmi Bolle, rectoris ecclesie parochialis de Aldryngton, nostre diocesis, qui, relictis hujus mundi secularibus negociis, sue mentis affectu totis viribus ad solitariam, et paupertatis vitam dirigere jam intendit, nos inducunt, ut suis piis desi-deriis in Domino annuamus. Ad laudem igitur et honorem Sancte et Individue Trinitatis, Beate Virginis Marie, Beati Ricardi, et omnium Sanctorum, habito primitus super hoc, cum dilectis filiis Decano et Capitulo ecclesie nostre Cicestren-sis tractatu diligenti dedimus, concessimus, ac concedimus, et per presentes confirmavimus Domino Willielmo Bolle pre-dicto unam placeam in cemeterio juxta borealem partem eccle-sie nostre predicte jacentem, continentem in latitudine viginti quatuor pedes, et in longitudine viginti novem pedes, habend-  
dam, edificandam, et sustinendam dictam placeam, cum suis pertinenciis, post edificationem ejusdem suis propriis sumpti-bus et expensis, et ad inhabitandum, ducendum, et exercendum in eâdem vitam anachorite et reclusi ad terminum vite sue in placea et manso per ipsum super placeam ejusmodi edificando. Itaque post recessum vel decessum dicti domini Willielmi Bolle, dicta placea, cum manso habitationis, et suis pertinen-ciis, ad dispositionem nostram, vel successorum nostrorum plene, libere, et integre revertaretur. In cujus rei testimonium sigillum nostrum presentibus est appensum. Datum in ma-nerio nostro de Amberle ultimo die mensis Maii, A.D. 1402, et nostre translationis sexto.”—*Register Episc. Reade*, p. 105.

In conclusion, I beg to tender my warmest thanks to the council of the *British Arch. Association*, for the loan, through their treasurer, T. J. Pettigrew, F.R.S., F.S.A., Esq., of the block from which the engraving of Mangnus tomb is taken.

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An article, at p. 331, of the April number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, gives a very interesting account of the Church of St. Duileck, commonly, but corruptly, called St. Doulagh, in the county of Dublin, Ireland; together with a few brief notices of the anchorites of the middle ages. In it some important and new points, connected with the habits and manners of this class of devotees, are brought out.

This church, or, as it may be more appropriately called, chapel, appears to have been erected, at a very early period, expressly for the residence of an anchorite; and is *one of the most*, if not *the only*, *perfect* specimen of an anchorage to be met with in the United Kingdom. In an account of it, written and circulated by a committee appointed to collect funds by means of public subscription for its reparation and future preservation, its style is stated to be very incongruous; displaying as it does in its different parts, architectural features of almost every period of the church's history. It is supposed to have been built as early as the year of grace 600; but it has evidently been added to, and much altered since then, to suit the taste and convenience of later anchorites. Its prevailing style is that of the 13th century; Dr. Reeves, who published an account of it in aid of the reparation fund, thinks of the 14th century. The building, which has an embattled central square tower, consists altogether of seven rooms, which are supposed to have been thus appropriated. The room on the ground floor, as the refectory; over this was the dormitory; and higher still in that part of the tower which rises above the roof was another small room, the use of which is not stated. North of this was the chapel, having a small cell over it; and high up in the building is a very small room left in the solid masonry work, which is called "St. Doulagh's bed." How this was approached does not very clearly appear. Does not the situation of this room support the conjecture which I have ventured to make in my account of the Buxted Rock's *Hermitage*, that the small room, marked D, in the plan (see p. 14), was used as a cubiculum?

Such was the building of the chapel of Doulagh, and such the accommodation which it afforded for an anchorite habitation. In the chapel is the founder's altar-tomb, and under the floor of this room are supposed to be interred the remains

of successive anchorites ; it being customary, Dr. Reeves tells us, and he quotes authority for the assertion, not only for anchorites to be buried in the cells which they occupied, a point new to me in their history, but they were accustomed to say daily mass, standing over the feet of the deceased ;—by the side of whose graves their own lay continually open, often occupying nearly a fourth part of the space allotted for their abode, and serving as a perpetual memento of the still narrower home to which they were hastening. These graves, a portion of which, Sir Henry Piers in his account of another Irish anchorite, whose cell was situated at Fore in the county of Westmeath, and which existed in his day, 1682, tells us, the incluses were accustomed to dig, or rather *scrape*—for in their construction they used no other tools, than their own nails. The cell of this anchorite he describes as the “sole of the religious of this kind in Ireland.” And he then goes on to state, that the occupant of this cell, at the time, had made a vow never to leave it ; which he most strictly fulfilled. *His* was perpetual inclusion. His dwelling-house consisted of little more than the chapel ; the remaining accommodation afforded him being about as much as a tall man would require to stretch himself upon, if he laid himself down on the floor ; his attendants being accommodated in an outhouse. So highly was he esteemed for his sanctity and devotion, that he was frequently visited by the more than ordinarily devout of the surrounding neighbourhood and country, who were in the habit upon such occasions, of making offerings on his altar, which aided him in his means of subsistence. But besides this, he had among the less devout, persons called proctors (procuratores), who were continually going about soliciting alms for him. He was called in the Irish language, *clock angoire*, or “the man in stone.” All the exercise this anchorite was enabled to take, was on what is called “his terras,” which was the space immediately over his cell, and which was so limited, that he could scarcely, Sir William Piers tells us, in doing so, “stretch forth his legs four times.” There is evidence of this anker house having been constructed previous to the year 1291. Its site is still locally designated, “the anker ;” and at the general dissolution of monasteries was found to be possessed of lands called “the anchorite’s



lands." It is now used as the burial vault of the family of the Earls of Westmeath.

Like the cell of the Aldrington Anchorite, that of St. Doulagh, was attached to a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary; as we learn from a letter of indulgence issued by Nicholas Fleming, Archbishop of Armagh, dated 1406, and preserved among the records of that see; by which forty days were granted to all such faithful Christians as should contribute towards the sustentation and reparation of this chapel. In 1506, John Young was the chaplain; to whom John Burnell, granted in that year messuages, lands, and tenements, with their appurtenances of the value of £4. per annum, for the maintenance of a chantry in this chapel. The most material alterations in the building, probably took place at this time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As the estimated cost of repairing this building is only £150. it must be the wish of every sincere archæologist, that the Committee may soon find themselves

in a position to preserve from the utter ruin which now threatens it—"one of the most ancient and interesting of Irish Ecclesiastical structures."

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