

## THE HEREDITARY SACERDOTAGE OF HEXHAM.

Of the causes leading to the cessation of bishops at Hexham, half a century before the Danish destruction of 875, and of the intermediate state of the church, we are not informed. The prelates of Lindisfarne, contented with their sway, did not assume the vacant diocese until, after their wanderings, the land between Tyne and Tees was given to Bishop Eardulph "in augmentation of the episcopate," the express reason being, that long before that time the Bishops of Hexham had ceased.<sup>1</sup> In the record of this grant there are no words like those which had conferred a beneficial interest in the land between Wear and Tyne: and for other and territorial reasons which belong to Durham history, we do not infer that more was given than an episcopal jurisdiction. The mere grant of land between the Wear and Tyne had been made by the local king alone, but to clothe the grantee with an extra cure of souls, the monarch of the realm is called to join. Such estates as had clearly belonged to the Bishops of Hexham *qua* bishops would doubtless pass, and they of Durham would at least have the right of using the church of Hexham itself as a cathedral; the property in it, subject to that usage, being either in the representatives of the monks who were there before it was made a see, or in the parish priest, for we know that even in later periods, the monks only took churches subject to parochial necessities.

But whether the Bishop of Durham affected to be the person to whom the monastery lapsed, or claimed through a stretched construction of his grant, it is plain that he took possession of Hexhamshire, and appointed civil officers, called provosts, to manage his broad domain.

We have two lists of them. One after Symeon's chapters in the early MS. relating to St. Cuthbert, of which Sir Wm. Lawson is the generous possessor; the other in an anonymous history of the diocesans largely abstracted in 1 Leland's *Collectanea*, 378. The two sufficiently differ to be trustworthy checks and corroborators of each other; and Leland's authority calls some of the provosts, *teins* or thanes, and commences the

<sup>1</sup> Symeon de Gestis. Houedon. Wessyngton.

list rather earlier than the Lawson MS., viz. with the entry, "Aldwine Bishop of Durham appointed *Tein Colam son of Eadred* his provost in Hexham church." The date agrees with Collan the son of Eadred, which Eadred was grandson of Hunred, one of the seven bearers of St. Cuthbert in the first flight, and after we have reached another Collan, and the priests of Hexham, I shall show a further support of this identity. The next provost was appointed by Bishop Edmund (1020-1041). By Leland he is called *Tein Ulkill son of Archall*, nephew<sup>2</sup> [*nepos*] of Bishop Aldwine, Edmund's predecessor. The Lawson MS. supplies us with his grandfather's name, calling him *Ulkill, Arkilles sune, Wincunes sune*. Between 1023 and 1041, Alfric, who, from being provost of the church of Winchester, had become Archbishop of York, is reported by Leland's authority to have sent letters to Bishop Edmund of Durham, moving the question by what right he could retain Hexham. This is the first notice we have of the claims of the archbishops, who must have traced a right to the lapsed monastery, either generally as metropolitans, or particularly because they sat in the chair of Wilfrid, who when Hexham was given to him, and the monastery was founded, was Bishop of York, a diocese from which Bernicia was forcibly divided, and Hexham made its capital. The latter position is more probable; for other monasteries fell into the hands either of the local bishops or of laymen, and even the Hexham writers do not deny that the Bishops of Durham truly represented the see of Hexham, as well as that of Lindisfarne and Chester. However this may be, some claim was set up, though nothing seems then to have come of it; for in the time of Bishop Egelric (1042-56), we find provosts as usual. By the appointment of that bishop, Ulkill was succeeded by another *Collan*, who, for reasons which will be given when we speak of the priests of Hexham, we may fairly identify as the grandson of Collan son of Eadred, the former provost of the same name, and son of a second Eadred. This descent is given by Symeon, and by comparison with the descents from Franco, another of St. Cuthbert's bearers, it seems to be correct. Collan, the provost of Egelric, who is only mentioned in the Lawson MS., was succeeded, under the same prelate's appointment, by *Ulkill, Ivinges sune*, as to whom both authorities agree. Bishop Egelwine (1056-1072) continued him in the post, and with that notification Leland's author ends his list. The Lawson MS. ends its enumeration with *Uthred, Ulkilles sune*, appointed by Egelwine, and father of Cospatric, who in the writer's days

<sup>2</sup> The bishop's granddaughter married Arkil, son of Fridigist and Arkil son of Egfrida or Egfrith. But were there no other reasons than chronology, we cannot make *nepos* signify great-grandson.

was sheriff in Tevietedale, a datum which gives high authority to his statements. Before stating what part Uthred took in the change of owners of Hexham, let us see how the parish cure fared during the rule of the provosts.

No doubt an hereditary priesthood sounds strangely. But Gregory VII.'s constitutions were not generally obeyed in England. Before Anselm's synod of 1102, wives were not prohibited to English priests, and Henry of Huntingdon notes the variety of public opinion on the change.<sup>3</sup> It was then provided that no archdeacon, priest, deacon, or canon marry a wife or retain one being married unto him, and that *the sons of priests be not heirs to the church of their fathers*. We may, therefore reasonably expect to find previous evidence of a contrary usage. The manner in which a living was thus entailed may be seen in Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*, No. 946, where a lady grants a church hereditarily to "Wæulfmr preost and his bearnteam" as long as he shall have any in orders. That the custom affected Hexham will presently be shown, and we have another well authenticated example in Bedlington. Reginald, be it premised, gives the nicknames or surnames of the four carriers (there were seven in all) who were deputed by Cuthbert to go and find materials for carrying his body. Stithard who spied a rope for the bridle was called *Rap*. The brother who discovered a horse (*i. e.* a colt) was called "*Coite, quod equum sonat*." Unred, who stumbled upon the car, was called "*Cretel, quod carrum anglice dicitur*." A fourth bearer, who secreted a cheese from his comrades, was believed to have been temporarily changed into a fox, whence all the family of his issue were named "*Tod, quod vulpeculam sonat*." Such, with due allowance, was the rude and curious method by which surnames arose. It is further to be gathered from Reginald that in the early days of Durham, the body of clerks, who only retained the usage of monks as respected singing, acquired the benefit of ownership (*dominii privilegium*) in the church, under the bishop. Of such sort and bringing up were the bearers of the sacred body. They possessed prebends of the church in the manner of canons who are now, says our author, called Seculars, and they performed monastic exercises in church offices. Whence it happened, that in this fashion of religion, he who had been turned into a fox possessed the church of *Bethlightune* with its appurtenances by right canonical in his issue (*jure canonicali in sua progenie*). To this day, says Reginald, the kindred of that man con-

<sup>3</sup> It is not necessary to repeat the proofs of the marriage of the clergy generally in an article drawing attention to their hereditary order and rights. Mr. Kemble, in his "Saxons in England," has laboured the whole subject, and he remarks that even Saint Wilfrid had a son. "Sanctus Pontifex noster de exilio cum filio suo proprio rediens," are the words of Eddius.—See Sym. Hist. Eccl. Dun. cap., xlv.

tinue there, whom the neighbours in the vulgar tongue call *Tod*. No doubt Eilaf Tod strongly resembled "Willielmus dictus *Fox*, clericus de Eboraco" of the Clervaux Cartulary. Reginald, after giving this instance to prove a system which, even in his day, needed illustration, proceeds to describe and give a prophecy of one of the prebendaries elderly and honest, who obtained the sole custody of St. Cuthbert's body, exercising such familiarity with him that he was believed to comb his hair and pare his nails, and oftentimes held friendly conversation with him as to whence and where he might find the relics of St. Beda the doctor and of other saints, and whether and how he might carry them off or deposit them beside Cuthbert himself. Clearly Reginald had no faith in Beda's bones having been identified in ordinary course, but of whatever worth his notion of his predecessor's knowledge may be, it is plain that in Cuthbert's friend we have Ælfred Westou, famous in reliquary lore, and from the way in which his position is elucidated by Tod's, we may be certain that whatever church he had under Durham, was hereditary and of prebendal right. As Leland's collections do not extend to the priests of Hexham, it is most satisfactory to find the Lawson MS. confirmed by collateral proofs, for that Ælfred's descendants did hold that church, is, as we shall see, upon evidence of the most unquestionable authority.

During the frequent changes of provosts, a couple of generations had sufficed for the priesthood of Hexham. Our evidence fails for the time of Aldhune. Bishop Edmund ascended the episcopal chair in 1021, and gave the church of Hexham to a priest called Ælfred by Symeon, *Elured* (Elvred) *Westou sune* in the chronicle attached to the Lawson MS., and *Ælfred Westoue* by Reginald.<sup>4</sup> Both he and his children, being also canons and officers in the church of Durham, exercised their duties at Hexham by deputies, Ælfred's successive curates being *Gamel elde* or *Gamel Hamel*, and *Gamel iunge*. Ælfred was secretary or custodian of the cathedral church of Durham. His antiquarian acquisitiveness enriched it with relics, which generally consisted of a sort of tithe taken from the bodies which by revelation<sup>5</sup> were disclosed to him in the ancient monasteries and churches of Northumberland. He dug them up, elevated them above the pavements for veneration, and took a part of the bones to Durham. According to Symeon's History of the Church of Durham, he thus subjected the bones of Balther and Bilfrid the anchor-

<sup>4</sup> A contemporary note in Reginald inserts *filius*. Westou and Westouson are in fact the same. Thus Symeon says that Gillo Michael though called son of Michael, might be more rightly called son of the devil.

<sup>5</sup> Symeon Hist. Dun.

ites, Acca and Alchmund the Bishops of Hexham, King Oswin, and the venerable Abbesses Ebba and Æthelgitha. Some interpolations, however, in the work known as *Symeon de Gestis* differ respecting the bones of Alchmund, stating that Alcmund appeared to a holy man of Hexham called Dregmas or Dregmo, and commanded him to go to Ælfred the son of Westou,<sup>6</sup> a priest of the church of Durham, and order him to carry his bones in the presence of the assembled folks of the territory of Hehxam beside the relics of Acca, who had already been taken out of the churchyard into the church, and that Ælfred's intention to steal a finger from Alcmund was frustrated, to his great disgrace, by a miracle of the too-confiding saint. A subsequent anecdote also shows that Acca was equally indisposed to be distributed. At Melrose the bones of Boisil, the preceptor of Saint Cuthbert, were revealed to Ælfred, and he appears to have brought them all away and hid them near St. Cuthbert, but in another chest (*scrinio*). The other relics were in St. Cuthbert's coffin itself. Ælfred's most famous feat, however, was the acquisition of the relics he identified with Beda's.

The great historian had now been dead three hundred years. He died in 735 and was buried at Jarrow, where a porch on the north side of the church was consecrated to his honour, and was existing in Symeon's time. Perhaps he had been interred there, and before the end of his century miracles were ascribed to his tomb; but his relics would seem to have been soon raised for adoration. When he died it was the custom at Jarrow to walk in the morning until the third hour with the relics of saints, and Bishop Lucius or Lullus, of Mentz, sent a covering of silk to enclose the relics of Beda himself. It is stated that the name of Venerable does not occur until the 9th century, notwithstanding the story which gives it a supernatural origin to fill in a gap in the disciple's rhyme of 'Hac sunt in fossa. Bedæ. . . . . ossa' In 794, sixty years after Beda's death, his monastery was devastated by the Danes, and we hear nothing more of his remains until the days of Ælfred Westou, from the nature of whose visits, coupled with the rest of the monks of Durham within its walls in 1070, and the subsequent burning of it by the Conqueror, it is plain that Jarrow church, like the fanes of Tynemouth and Wearmouth, had been repaired, and that its desolate state when Aldwine and his monks came three or four years afterwards, was, as regarded the church, of very recent origin.

Ælfred knew, says Symeon, that the doctor died and was buried at the monastery in Gyruu (Jarrow), and every year he came on the anniversary of his death, and there was wont to be instant in prayer. Upon

<sup>6</sup> *Westneor* is the printing of the Mon. Hist.

a certain time, he went after his usual manner, and after he had passed a few days there alone in the church, praying and watching, he returned to Durham very early one morning by himself, a thing he had never done before, not wishing now to have any witness of his secret. He never returned to Jarrow, not caring to go, since he had obtained what he desired so much. He lived many years afterwards, and when his friends asked him where rested the bones of Venerable Beda, he was wont to reply:—"None has known that better than I. Beloved, ye may take it for sure and certain, that the same chest which protects the most sacred body of Father Cuthbert, also contains the bones of the reverend doctor and monk Beda. None need seek for a portion of his relics out of the shelter of that coffin." This he would communicate *sub alti silentio*, lest strangers in the church should take a lesson from himself. Besides, Ælfred had to contend with domestic treason. Bishops Egelric and Egelwine, and their attendant monks, belonged to distant monasteries, and wished to transport the Durham relics to their own houses. They were only restrained through awe of this austere priest, who was devoted to Saint Cuthbert, and notoriously a great favourite with that potent confessor. A brother of the monastery of Durham, of the name of Gamel, probably the younger curate of Ælfred, seems to have stated to Symeon that he had been an eye-witness to his gratifying his friends by holding a hair of St. Cuthbert in the flame, where it glistened like gold, and was not consumed. Of the most peculiar circumstances by which Ælfred's knowledge of this virtue must have been acquired we are not informed. Dr. Raine's explanation of it is well known. Reginald adds greatly to the story, and connects St. Cuthbert's comb and scissors with Ælfred's dressing of his hair, but he qualifies his language with "It is reported."

Symeon does not state when the translation of Beda was effected. Richard of Hexham says that Acca and Alcmund were removed in Egelwine's time (1056-1070). The Jarrow feat was probably earlier, as Ælfred lived many years afterwards.

Mr. Giles has the following passage:—"Cave, in his *Historia Literaria*, i. 613, says, on the authority of Seller, who quotes from a Saxon MS. in the *Liber Vigorniensis*, p. 103, that Bede's bones underwent one more removal to York; and the author of the *Monasticon Anglicanum* says that they were finally deposited at Glastonbury Abbey, with the relics of Esterwin, Sigfrid, and Herbert, Abbots of Wearmonth." It is, however, generally taken for granted that the relics brought by Westou rested in the coffin of St. Cuthbert until his translation, of which we have a faithful account from, as I have every reason to believe, the



hand of Symeon. The narrative follows other chapters by him in the early Lawson MS.; we know from other evidence that he was present at the examination of the coffin, and the way in which he mentions the bones of Beda seems to confirm the conjecture. "It has been *already stated*," says he, "who removed them hither from Jaruu. In fact, he who transferred to the church of Durham the bones of St. Boysil, the same, *by revelation*, transferred to the same place those of Doctor Beda," and placed them in different parts of the church. That word revelation is, I fear, fatal to the position that the locality or existence of Beda's bones was well known when the pious fraud was enacted. Reginald, who wrote later, but was well acquainted with one of Ælfred's descendants, tells us still more plainly that the knowledge of Ælfred on these matters was derived from conversations with St. Cuthbert.

Symeon, in his History of the Church, speaks with exceeding caution. After giving Westou's account, and the secrecy with which he clothed the treasure he had brought, Symeon says:—"with whose declaration (*sententia*) touching Beda, that verse composed in the English tongue agrees, where, when the state of this place, and of the reliques of saints contained in it, are treated of, mention is made of Beda's relics along with others." In another place he has preserved the Saxon poem in question, and there, sure enough, we meet with "the famous writer (*booker* the word is) Beda and Bosil the abbot." "Doubtless," proceeds Symeon, "those bones are known to be his, which after many years (*i.e. cir. 1104*) were found placed with the uncorrupted body of Father Cuthbert, separated from the other relics in a linen bag." It may be asked, why these Beda's any more than those of any other saint? It may be answered, because Bosil's were in a separate coffer, and because it is not clear that the church professed to have the full remains of other saints. If it had, the identity would again have been clothed with doubt, as the other bones seem to have had each their linen sacks, some of which, in a half-decayed state, were in the larger repository in which the relics reposed in Reginald's time. William of Malmsbury only mentions the bones of Beda and King Celwulf as in linen bags by themselves, but our local historians are preferable in authority.

As Ælfred Westou contended for the integrity of his charge of relics with Bishops Egelric and Egelwine, while the Lawson MS. says that his son *Eylaf Lawreu* held the church of Hexham under those prelates, he must have surrendered the cure of Hexham to his son in his lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> He probably effected this by the investiture mentioned by Dr. Whitaker in his Hist. Whalley, 41. "It enabled an incumbent who was also patron to transfer during his lifetime all his rights in a benefice without the intervention either of bishop

It was probably in consequence of this step that Eylaf held the cure for 40 years at least. Like his father, he was an office-bearer at Durham, being treasurer of the church and hereditary canon, and he executed the cure of Hexham by placing there a priest called *Sproh*. Up to this period the possession of the church of Durham had been continuous. Eylaf, says the Lawson MS., had the church as long as the land was inhabited, and the change is attributed to the effects of the Conqueror's devastation. For three months did the riot go on, and the whole land between Humber and Tweed was reduced to solitude, except York, Durham, and Bambrough. For two years the church of Durham lacked a pastor, Egelwine quitting it by flight in 1070, and the same year Thomas senior became Archbishop of York. The provost of Hexham, Uctred Ulkilles sune, being thus absolved from any feelings of gratitude to his old master, went to Archbishop Thomas, and pointed out that such a place as Hexham might easily be reduced under his ownership (*dominium*), when the whole land lacked a husbandman. The archbishop followed his advice before the see was filled up, and he entered Hexham, the land being everywhere waste, and no one being prohibited from inhabiting where he liked.

From this time the bailifwick of Hexham ceased to be a temporality of the see of Durham, but the parochial cure and episcopal government were untouched. When Bishop Carileph was engaged with his new foundation of monks at Durham, Archbishop Lanfranc confirmed the diocese as including "all the parish which is between Tese and Twede, with the church of Hexham and that of Lindisfarne, where anciently there were episcopal seats, and Carlisle and Tevietedale and all the adjacent provinces." So Archbishop Thomas of York himself defines it as all the land which is between Tese and Tyne (the very words employed in describing King Alfred's gift, which did not necessarily pass any ownership of soil), Northumberland, Thevietedale, Tindale, Carlisle, Weredale, with the church of Extildesham and all the parish pertaining, and the church of Lindisfarne, where anciently bishopricks existed." Archbishop Thomas recites a miracle of St. Cuthbert performed on himself, and when he confirmed the church he probably only meant it as a cathedral, and he may have taken part in the next event in good faith and under the belief that he was entitled to provide for the parochial cure in right of the monastic lands. In the change at the church of Durham, Eylaf Lawreu

or archdeacon. It appears in particular that St. Peter's church in Cambridge was thus conveyed.—Rot. Plac. 6 Ri. I. Rot. i., and Selden, c. xii. s. 4."

We have already noted the provision by the Synod. Westm. 3 H. I. *Ut filii presbyterorum non sint hæredes ecclesiarum patrum suorum*. But this difficulty was obviated by the investiture mentioned above.



the priest of Hexham was among the secular canons who—perhaps from uxorious motives—refused to take the monastic habit. It is probable that the expelled seculars who were granted prebends in the churches of Darlington, Auckland, and Norton, were deprived of the hereditary churches they had held as canons. Eylaf, therefore, took the best course for himself that he could. He went to the archbishop, and from him received that same church which he had formerly received from Bishop Egelwine, and on his death his son Eylaf entered upon the church of Hexham through the same archbishop, consequently before 1100.

Before proceeding further, the Lawson MS. may be confirmed as to the tenure of the church by Ælfred's descendants and the supposition about the family of the provosts called Collan. The consecutive descendants of Hunred the bearer were Eadulf, Eadred, Collan, Eadred, and the second Collan. This last Collan had a sister whose issue were *Eilaf*, Hemming, and Ulfill, the first dead, the two latter living priests when Symeon closed his history at 1096. Nothing is more probable than that Ælfred should marry a granddaughter of Aldhune's provost of his hereditary church, she being the sister of his own contemporary Collan the second. The eldest son is called by the family name of Eylaf, and as Eylaf Lawreu certainly died in Archbishop Thomas's time, Symeon is quite accurate in his distinction between the living and the dead if the identity of these Eylafs is admitted. A single charter of Bishop Carileph, in 1085, confirms the Lawson MS. as to the priesthood of Eylaf at Hexham, Reginald as to the succession of Eylaf Tod's family at Bedlington, and Symeon as to the existence of the two younger brothers, Hemming and Ulfill, whose priesthoods are located. The charter is printed after the Three Historians, p. xx., and contains the marks or crosses of *Eilav preost of Extildesham*, *Eilav of Bethlington*, *Hemming preost of Brentespethe*, and *Ulchil preost of Seggefeld*.

The descent of office from Eylaf Lawreu to his son of the same name, as stated in the Lawson MS., is also confirmed by Richard of Hexham, to whom we are chiefly indebted for the closing passages of the family of the great authority in relics. Richard, with monastic partiality, grieves that under Archbishop Thomas senior, a secular priest named Eilav<sup>9</sup> possessed this church, so rich in heavenly treasure, that the prelate erected it with Holm into an additional prebend of York, of which Richard de Maton, a canon of Beverley, was the first occupant, and that Eilav, the son of the aforementioned Eilav, held the cure as ministering priest under Maton, being rewarded for his service with a portion of the

<sup>9</sup> My copy reads Eilanus, from a common and pardonable confusion of the letters " and " so similar in MSS.

benefice. In this miserable state, continues my author, the church remained until the death of Archbishop Girard (1100-1108), torn to pieces, reduced to ruins and surrounded with wretchedness by the perfidy of the inhabitants, the malice of secular priests, and the oppression of carnal men; deserted and dilapidated consequent upon the plundering and depopulation of the neighbourhood.

During this period, viz. about 1101, Leland's authority, and a Durham chronicle quoted in the *Monasticon* under Hexham, state that in the dissensions between Henry I. and Bishop Flambard, the king deprived that bishop of the church of Hexham, with the region belonging to it, and gave it to the archbishop, notwithstanding the gift of Kings Guthred and Alfred, which in the *Monasticon* is made specifically to include within the bounds of St. Cuthbert's lands for ever, all the land between Tees and Tyne, the church of Hexham, with the adjoining region on the south of the Tyne.

In the notes of Rudd upon Symeon, is mentioned indeed a larger history of Durham quoted by Wharton, which runs as follows:—"The king seized the bishoprick of Durham, and abstracted Caerleil and Hexham, appendages of the diocese, of which he gave Hexham to the Archbishop of York; in Caerleil he founded a bishoprick *de novo*, and gave it to Ethelwolf Prior of St. Oswald's, which places, *from the time of St. Cuthbert and before* (!) were under the jurisdiction of the church of Lindisfarne or Durham.

Mr. Hinde, with prudent caution, has remarked, that Symeon's Continuator is silent as to Hexham, though he mentions the abstraction of Carlisle and Teviotdale. That the question, indeed, of beneficial interest in Hexhamshire may have been put at rest on this occasion is not improbable. There may even have been additional privileges and exemptions conferred on this peculiar jurisdiction of the archbishops. But we are not bound to conclude that the bare abstract bounds of episcopacy were touched. Indeed, it is very questionable whether Hexham, subject though it be to its peculiar exemptions, has ever been out of the diocese of Durham. While Richard of Hexham dilates upon the prerogatives of his priory, he seems to regard them as independent grants of bishops, archbishops, princes and kings, by reason of the ancient honour of the church; and a memorial of the diocese is observable, though no custom or due was owing to the Bishop of Durham or his officers, for there is a salvo if the bishop *himself* demanded the presence of the prior or a brother at the discussion of an ecclesiastical cause. The mention of the prior brings this clause down long after Flambard's quarrel. The clergy of Hexham might renew the sacred oil at Easter either from York or

Durham, and might be ordained anywhere. Such privileges would be the same, in whatever diocese the church was. Speaking of Flambard, it may be noted that he is stated to have had a son named Elias, who succeeded him in his prebend in Lincoln Cathedral—another instance of an inheritance of spiritualities—and we have read that the office of Culdee was in some cases hereditary in the Scotch church, which had a considerable influence over that of Lindisfarne. But by far the most interesting example of hereditary priesthood is found in the hereditary deans of Whalley, who continued as late as 1215, when the Lateran Council finally prohibited the marriage of ecclesiastics. On the office of a dean of Whalley, who was compounded of patron, incumbent, ordinary, and lord of the manor, the reader is referred to Dr. Whitaker's *History of Whalley*, pp. 41, 324. The list of deans stretches far into the Saxon times, and there is much charter evidence bearing upon it. The Townleys descend from these deans of Whalley.

In 1109 Thomas junior succeeded Gerard as archbishop, and in the year 1113 the clergy of York, under some erroneous supposition that Eata Bishop of Hexham had presided at York, and feeling that York had no reliques of its saints, and Hexham already had those of four, persuaded the archbishop to remove Eata's bones to York. It is unnecessary to state the miraculous interposition employed to prevent this step; the circumstance is mentioned because the biographer of Eata states that he then reposed within the church, at the south side near the sacarium, that a little chapel of stone was built over his tomb, and farther that he the writer thought it probable that the saint was translated thither by "Alfredus filius Westuerum," a priest of Durham church, who lifted Acca and Alcmund from the earth, and enclosed them in shrines within the church. The life of Eata is in a MS. at York of the 14th century, and has been published by the Surtees Society.

The same year saw the church of Hexham taken out of the hands of Richard de Maton, he receiving in exchange a portion of the common funds of the chapter, and on Nov. 1st, the archbishop planted canons regular in the church, endowing them with the church and its possessions and privileges. Eilav, however, continued to hold his cure, with a great part of the benefice. As Richard of Hexham has it, he was permitted to hold his possessions as a gift of the church, and to the great honour of the canons, to whom, he says, the lands belonged, by both ecclesiastical and civil law, and who might have justified the securing of them to themselves, but who, rather than compromise the credit of the fraternity, submitted to every hardship, to penury, and even to hunger. Such a statement will be taken with very great caution in these

days, when the system of starving the working clergy is we may hope drawing to a close, and the wretched disputes between the secular and monastic clergy are weighed at their true value. To have deprived Eilav of his guerdon after he had borne the heat of the day for the advantage of the new comers would have been unjust indeed: to have taken hostile measures against him would have raised the secular interest, and opened the whole of the intricate questions about Hexhamshire. The new canons adopted the prudent course of allowing them to die out with him if possible.<sup>10</sup> The claims of his sons would perhaps have been sufficiently barred by the cessation of that prebendal arrangement at Durham, under which Hexham church had been held by his ancestors, and by Anselm's constitutions; and, as it happened, at least one of them became a monk himself, being no less a personage than the celebrated historian of the Battle of the Standard, Ethelred or Ailred, afterwards abbot of the beautiful foundation at Rievaulx, who in his youth had been brought up at the Scotch court, probably in consequence of the ownership of the Earldom of Northumberland.

Twenty six years after the new order of canons had been introduced, viz. in 1134, Eilav, being at Durham, fell very ill. For reasons into which, in the changed state of our country, we cannot fully enter, there was, indubitably, a greater sancity ascribed to religious orders than to the ordinary clergy, and Eilav, through a sense of justice or other motives, listened to the advice of 'certain wise men,' and sent for Robert the Prior of Hexham. On his arrival he surrendered the lands of his church which he held, thanking him and his canons for having treated him more like a father than a chaplain, and repenting him of the course he had held towards them. In token of his restitution he offered a fair phylactery with a silver cross which should surround the relics of Acca and Alcmund as a perpetual memorial of the church's freedom. The three sons of the penitent, Ethelred monk of Rievaulx (who was accompanied by his abbot), Samuel, and Ethelwold, were assembled to witness and perhaps to consent to the act, and the historian was there also, describing himself as "a certain canon of the church of Hexham, Richard by name."

The sickness of Eilav increasing, he assumed the monastic habit himself in the church of St. Cuthbert, whom, like his grandfather, he had ever held in wonderful reverence. Upon this point the testimony of

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Kemble gives instances where evicted canons seem to have retained their influence over their prebends, which could not legally be taken from them, though they might be expelled from the cathedral service and the collegiate buildings: and he remarks, that craft rather than force was employed in the changes of ecclesiastical constitutions.

Richard of Hexham is confirmed. Bishop Geoffrey's confirmation to the convent of Coken, which, he says, "Aillan (read Aillav), the priest by ancient right of patrimony, held of me and my predecessors, and becoming a monk of St. Cuthbert, gave by his hereditary testament [that is, a will conferring inheritance] to St. Cuthbert and his monks, his sons being present and confirming the same." The charter of Eilaf himself seems to be lost, and the copy of it at Durham, in which he is called *Ællaf*, is supposed by Mr. Surtees to be a forgery, but the gift, by the same name, is mentioned in a chronicle quoted by Leland,<sup>11</sup> and the bishop's confirmation places the fact beyond dispute. The donor's entrance into the order was his civil death, and his testament would at once take effect; but his natural demise was close at hand. He spent several days in the exercises of a dying man, and then delivered up his soul.<sup>12</sup>

Ethelred the Abbot of Rievaulx is more than once quoted as an authority for miracles by Reginald, who dedicates his book to him. It was from him that he received by family tradition the story of a weasel making her nest in St. Cuthbert's coffin in the time of *Ælfred Westoue*, who, by a pardonable error, is made the grandfather of the celebrated abbot. Chronology and other collateral evidence is confirmed by Richard, who expressly states that he was the penitent *Eilaf's* son. He died about 1166, leaving the character of a good man and an animated writer, and his name occurs in the calendar of saints' days on Jan. 12, along with that of Benedict Biscop, the famous Abbot of Wearmouth. Of his two brothers, one of them would probably be father to the abbot's niece, who is mentioned by Reginald as married to Robert Fitz-Philip, knight, a nobleman of Lothian, whose title of nobility was conferred more on account of his wealth than his virtue.

One more member of this family, Aldred, must be noticed, not only because he became a brother of the church of Hexham, and thus connects the old order of things and the new, but because he told a story proving that the penitent, besides his love of St. Cuthbert, had very much of the spirit of *Ælfred Westoue* in his composition. The story occurs in the interpolations which seem to have been made by a canon of Hexham in the book known as *Symeon De Gestis*, for the purpose of showing that no parts of Acca and Almund had left Hexham for Durham, and when they were written Aldred was dead. It seems that when Aldred was young, he was brought up in the house of his brother, who was a priest, and ruled the church of Hexham before the reconstitution by Archbishop Thomas junior. This brother reflected how rich

<sup>11</sup> 1 Lel. Col. 390.

<sup>12</sup> Ric. Hag.

any church would be in the possession of but a fragment of Acca's relics, and contemplated a division of them. The mode in which his intention was baffled may be seen in the *Monumenta Historica*. From the same authority it appears that the first of Archbishop Thomas's canons who was sent to Hexham was named Edric.

It only remains to trace the gift made by Ælfred Westou to the church of Durham.

Reginald states that the relics which were turned out of St. Cuthbert's coffin, in consequence of having mouldered and defiled it, were placed in wooden receptacles hewn out for the purpose, and honourably preserved elsewhere in the church in the larger repository already mentioned. The MS. at York, which enumerates the relics preserved at Durham, distinguishing the relics (which it minutely professes to identify) that were found in St. Cuthbert's tomb, states that *other* relics were in ivory caskets and chrystalline vials and other places outside out of the feretory of St. Cuthbert, though in the feretrar's custody. It is presumed from this, that the relics found in the tomb were *inside* of the feretory. Among them are the *bodies* of Cuthbert, Beda, and Boisil. The other remains are called *bones* only; and it may be specially remarked, that those of Acca and Alcmund do not occur.<sup>13</sup> The tunic of St. Beda was kept elsewhere. But when Pudsey ruled the see, he caused a feretory for Beda's bones to be made of gold and silver, of such exquisite work that it balanced the splendour of the material.<sup>14</sup> It was moreover adorned with precious stones, and included many other relics of saints besides those of Beda.<sup>15</sup> This feretory remained for the present near St. Cuthbert's tomb, and was not removed until long afterwards to the bishop's beautiful chapel, the Galilee, the only use of which mentioned by Geoffrey of Coldingham was for the admission of females. It received its present name immediately; as a gift from a Lord of Dinsdale to Pudsey and St. Cuthbert, is mentioned in the charter as made "upon the altar of Blessed Mary, in the western portion of the same church *quæ vocatur Galilea*."

In 1383 the plan of ivory and crystal receptacles continued, and we meet with some of Westou's acquisitions in the shrinekeeper's inventory. We see a portion of the tunic of St. Beda the Doctor, with some of the bones of the Innocents, &c., in a vial of crystal with a foot of silver gilt. Robes and hair of Boisil partially occupied a little ivory casket. Another ivory casket contained relics of Acca, with portions of his face-cloth and chasuble, which were in the ground for three hundred years; a bag of

<sup>13</sup> *Scriptores Tres.* cccc,xxvi.

<sup>14</sup> Geoff. Coldingham.

<sup>15</sup> Continuation of Symeon, 386.

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cloth of gold professed now to contain a portion of the bones of *St. Alkmund*. The skulls of Ceolwulf and Boisil were in a shrine adorned with silver and gold and images. Boisil's inner tunic was in an ivory turret, with images of gold and silver. There was also a piece of Saint Oswin's flesh; but of Balthar, Bilfrid, Ebba, and Æthelgitha, all mentioned by Symeon as yielding spoils to Ælfred, I do not perceive any trace, though they are mentioned in the earlier catalogue. Of Boisil we only notice the scull in a fair shrine of gold, silver, and images. Perhaps the other bones rested until the Reformation with those of Beda, and were then thrown away with those scheduled. For a similar reason the shrinekeeper does not account for the bones of Beda, because that saint had now an altar of his own in the Galilee. His gold and silver feretory contained two sets of Latin verses, one "in the first work in the lower part thereof," meaning perhaps the shrine itself in opposition to its fair cover presently to be noticed. This set stated the contents of the receptacle, that one Peter was the artizan, and Bishop Hugh the giver. The other set of verses stated that, in 1370, the prior (Forcer) translated the feretory from near the tomb of Saint Cuthbert at the request of Richard of Barnard Castle, whose bones rested not far from thence under a marble stone, which, as Dr. Raine states, adjoined the present tomb of Beda on the west. The *Rites and Monuments* give the following account of the tomb before the dissolution:—

"There was on the south side of the said Galilee, betwixt two pillars, a goodly monument, all of blue marble, the height of a yard from the ground, supported by fine pillars, in every corner one, and under the midst one; and above the said through of marble pillars did stand a second shrine to Saint Cuthbert,<sup>16</sup> wherein the bones of the holy man St. Bede were enshrined, being accustomed to be taken down every festival day, when there was any solemn procession, and carried with four monks in time of procession and divine service. Which being ended, they did convey it into the Galilee, and set it upon the said tomb again, having a fair cover of wainscot, very curiously gilded, and made to draw up and down over the shrine, when they pleased to shew the sumptuousness thereof."—"On the south side of the said Galilee was the altar of St. Bede, before which altar lie his bones and relics interred under the same place where his shrine was before exalted."—"There are two stones that were of St. Bede's shrine in the Galilee, of blue marble, which after the defacing thereof [by the visitors at the suppression] were brought into the body of the church and now lie over against the eastmost tomb of the Nevils, joined both together. The uppermost stone of the said shrine hath four holes in every corner, for irons to stand and to be fastened in, to guide the covering when it was drawn up

<sup>16</sup> This seems to be an erroneous deduction from the line, "Transtulit hoc feretrum Cuthberti de prope tumba."

or let down, whereupon did stand St. Bede's shrine. And the other is a plain marble stone, which was lowest, and did lie above a little marble tomb, whereon the lower end of the five small pillars did stand; which pillars did also support the uppermost stone."

The uppermost stone may readily be detected still from its holes, between the the third and fourth piers from the west, on the south side of the nave.<sup>17</sup>

The bill for the demolition of the shrine is, says Dr. Raine, preserved. The saint's literary fame, after long centuries of shadow, had now raised his importance above that of St. Cuthbert, and not to mention Bishop Cosin's long epitaph, which was written on parchment and suspended in a frame near his tomb, the erection of the tomb itself contrasts singularly with the plain blue stone which marks St. Cuthbert's resting place. This must be the tomb, alluded to by Speed, when he says that in the Galilee "the marble tomb of Venerable Beda remaineth," and by Hegge, when he speaks of "Saint Beed's bones which there lie interred under a tombe of black marble without any inscription." Camden, in his remains, has a story of a French bishop who, returning out of Scotland, and being brought to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, kneeled down, and after his devotions offered a copper baubee, saying "Saint Cuthbert *if* thou art a saint, pray for me." But afterwards, being brought unto the tomb of Beda, saying likewise his orisons, he offered there a French crown, with this alteration, "St. Beda, *because* thou art a saint, pray for me." Camden says that this took place "not many years since," so that it very likely happened after the Reformation. At all events, singular to relate, Dr. Raine notes among the objects which had apparently been pushed through the chinks of the side masonry of the tomb, and were found on its examination in 1830, a French coin of a metal resembling gold, powdered with fleurs-de-lis. There were also found a few abbey pieces, a small circular flattened piece of lead, and a half crown of William and Mary.

This examination was only of the contents of the altar tomb, down to the level of the pavement, and perhaps somewhat deeper, and the monument was replaced; but on the 27th of May, 1831, being, by a singular coincidence, Saint Beda's day in the calendar, the tomb was again removed: what followed shall be given in Dr. Raine's own words.

"After finding a few more abbey pieces in their course downwards, the workmen, at the depth of about three feet from the level of the floor, came in contact with the following human bones, which, although by no means furnishing the full complement of those belonging to a perfect skeleton,

<sup>17</sup> Ornsby, 88.



appeared nevertheless to have been purposely arranged in their respective places, in a coffin of the full size, of which, though in a very decomposed state, there were numerous traces. 1. The *palvarium*, tolerably perfect, consisting of the *os frontis* and the *ossa parietalia*, the former so remarkably flat (still more so than that of Cuthbert) that a cast was made of the whole bone before its reinterment. 2. The *ossa temporalia*, and portions of the bones of the basis of the scull. 3. The *lower jaw*, apparently that of a man advanced in years, or who had lost the greater part of his teeth at an early age. The cavities from which the teeth had fallen had disappeared in the bone, so that a considerable portion of time must have intervened between that period and the death of the individual to whom the jaw had belonged. 4. A portion of the *malar bones*. 5. The heads of both the *humeri*. 6. The *radius* and *ulna* of one fore-arm. 7. The *os humeri* of the other. 8. A portion of the *sternum*. 9. The *thigh bones*. 10. Eight bones of the *tarsi* of the feet. The above bones were found, as we have already stated, stretched along a space of nearly six feet in length, and that the grave had contained no other human remains was proved by a very careful investigation. For this fact we can perhaps give a reason. Bede's bones, real or reputed—for this is a matter into which we have no inclination to enquire—were widely dispersed—much, we dare say, to the profit of the man who is reported to have stolen them from their first resting-place at Jarrow. There were few monasteries in England which could not boast of some of them; and, even now, in more than one church upon the continent, the curious in these matters may see some of his ribs. We must not omit to mention, that in the upper part of the grave, apparently in the place which the right hand would have occupied if elevated for the benediction, was discovered a massy ring of iron, plated with a thick coat of gold, and containing upon a boss the device of a cinquefoil, a common ornament at the time of the dissolution, when these bones were buried. No priest, during the reign of popery, was buried or enshrined without his ring. Perhaps this of which we are writing had been a hasty present to so memorable a man, by those who laid his remains in the ground, in conformity with custom, and in the stead of a more valuable ring, which had been taken away by the king's commissioners. We know that these men carried off with them a splendid ring from the coffin of Cuthbert. The ring found in the grave of Bede was lined internally with one or two folds of thick woollen cloth, to accommodate it apparently to the substance upon which it had been placed; but of that substance no characteristic trace remained. The ring and the abbey pieces were placed in the library along with the coins, &c., discovered during the previous imperfect investigation first mentioned. The bones were, the day afterwards, reinterred in a box of oak, covered with lead, in which was enclosed a memorial upon parchment of the whole particulars of the exhumation, and then upon the upper slab of the tomb, which was carefully replaced, was cut afterwards the old inscription:—"HAC SUNT IN FOSSA BÆDÆ VENERABILIS OSSA."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Brief Guide to Durham Cath.

So far Dr. Raine, and his son has, with true conservative feeling, placed the cast alluded to in this Society's collections. It is really a very singular formation, and of high interest. That it is what was taken in 1104 to belong to Beda there can be no reasonable doubt. On the earlier questions of identity an opinion is not offered. For if the fate of Beda's bones after the Danish invasion was not popularly known, it is not likely that Ælfred had special knowledge of them. We are then thrown upon his revelations, a subject quite extra the consideration of an antiquarian society.

The library of Durham Cathedral, as is well known, boasts of two books in Beda's handwriting, and several representations of him, always in a blue habit, once decorated the cathedral windows.<sup>19</sup> The monks had also in 1446 a cup called Beda.<sup>20</sup> Of this "goodly cup called St. Bede's Bowl, the outside was of black mazer, and all the bowl within the mazer was of silver, double gilt with gold, and all the edge of it being finely and largely wrought round about with silver, and double gilt with gold; and in the midst of it was the picture of that holy man St. Bede as if he had been writing, and the foot of the said bowl was all of silver, and double gilt with gold, with four joints of silver coming down on every side one, double gilt with gold from the edge to the foot, to be taken asunder."<sup>21</sup>

Ed.

<sup>19</sup> Hunter's description.

<sup>20</sup> Raine's Guide, 94.

<sup>21</sup> Rites and Monuments.