

XIX.—UNUSED EVIDENCES RELATING TO SS. CUTHBERT AND BEDE.

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IN 1827, with the skeleton of St. Cuthbert, were found a magnificent stole and a maniple, made by Ælfflæd's order for Frithestan, the bishop. He was consecrated to the see of Winchester in 905, by order of King Edward the Elder. It has been supposed that Ælfflæd was Edward the Elder's queen of that name; but Eyre suggests that, as Edward the Elder's sister and his daughter, a nun, were so-called as well as his queen, any one of the three may have bestowed the gifts on Frithestan. The fact stands that the truly regal needle-work came from Winchester to Durham. Dr. Raine volunteered the most possible explanation of the transit. It was this:—It might be, as the Queen died long before the Bishop, that the present never, in reality, came into the possession of him for whom it was fabricated, but was preserved in the palace. It might be that these two articles of priestly dress were not intended to become the personal property of that bishop, but only to be worn by him when officiating in the private chapel of the Queen: either of these circumstances would account for their falling into the hands of King Athelstan.' The queen died before 916, Frithestan died in 932 or 933, and in 934 King Athelstan, the illegitimate successor of Edward the Elder, gave to St. Cuthbert one stole with a maniple, one girdle, and two bracelets of gold, meaning, apparently, of golden tissue. Edmund, Athelstan's successor, and the legitimate son of Edward the Elder, also gave two golden bracelets taken from his arm, and two robes of Grecian workmanship. His brother Edred offered divers gifts worthy of a king. Only two such bracelets of golden tissue were found, not four; but there was a golden girdle of the same materials and workmanship.

Between 968 and 990, according to Prior Wessington—whose information in this matter, as in others, is not traced—Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, arrived at St. Cuthbert's shrine, and, 'of the

highest audacity', raised the lid of St. Cuthbert's coffin, talked with the dead man as with a friend, and placed upon his body a pledge of his love. The church of Durham certainly had an agreement with several convents for the celebration of *officia plenaria*, and among these Winchester occurs.

In 1104, at the translation of the remains of St. Cuthbert, the monks seem to have felt doubtful as to their existence at all. However, they were supposed to have been found incorrupt. Bishop Flambard, the builder of the splendid nave of Durham minster, was consecrating an altar in some other part of the Cathedral, and seems to have been another Gallio. I do not pursue this matter further.

To return to the Winchester garments. Eadwine, a monk, has a strange statement copied in the Winchester Book (Addit. MSS. Brit. Mus., fo. 114*b*). Apparently its date is between 1032 and 1056. The document meanders about some disputes between the old and the new monasteries, and the 'good laws betwixt the two monasteries in monks' days, as Bishop Frithestan has done in priests' days'. Bp. Æthelwold arbitrates. The monk goes north to St. Cuthbert. 'God and the saint granted me that I washed him with my hands, and combed his head with a comb, and sheared his hair with shears, and clothed him all with *new clothing*, and took from him his old clothes; some I left there, and some I have here'. The whole of the 'strange narrative' may be seen in Thorpe's *Diplomatarium*. Does it not explain the occurrence of Winchester vestments at Durham?

Eyre will have none of Reginald's account of Elfred Westoue's combing the head of St. Cuthbert, and wrapping him in such robes as he, Elfred, thought fit, Symeon only mentioning that Elfred exhibited a single hair of the saint which, in the fire, shone like gold. On the other hand, Reginald does not mention Symeon's story about the Conqueror's precipitate flight from Durham to the Tees because the monks would not allow him to satisfy his doubts whether they had St. Cuthbert at all.

I now put forward another unused document. Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*, temp. Edw. I., whensoever derived, as edited by Robert of Brunne, contains much extraordinary matter. In describing the Durham flight in the Conqueror's time, it says:—'Seynt Cutberte's *bones* of fertre toke thei out'. [Saint Cuthbert's *bones* out of feretory

took they out.] On the community's return the reading is:—'The Bisshop brouh the *bones* agayn unto the se'. [The bishop brought the *bones* again unto the see.]

In narrating William's other doings, the chronicler says:—

'Sithen to Durham went, ther he destroyed the see
The Bisshop he bisouht, S. Cutberte's *bones* to see,
The Bisshop opned the schryne, the *bones* thei up raised,
The Kyng wepte with his ine, that sight mykelle he praised,
And silver grete plente opon the altere laid,
Their franchise gaf tham fre, the whilk that thei of said.
The kastle did he wirke of his tresore alle,
And S. Cutberte's kirke closed with a walle.'

The phrase, 'Their franchise gave them free,' is very curious, but cannot be treated of in this paper. One thing is clear, the body was not secreted from the world at large, and the fears of 1104 are unintelligible.

It may be objected that Langtoft is a late chronicler. Be it so, as long as he is independent of the mere copyists. We all know how the very existence of an usurper, unmentioned save by one chronicler, was ignored until the Hexham stycas proved his reign.

It is obvious that neither the Winchester monk, nor Elfred Westoue, nor the Conqueror, had any difficulties. As to those created in 1104, as compared with the discoveries of 1827, you must form your own opinion. Eyre's is a disingenuous book, Consitt's conscientious. Lingard, before his death, believed that the remains found were those of St. Cuthbert. The remarks of Henry Howard, in one of the Durham newspapers, appear to be unknown; they are superior to Lingard's. There is an amusing note in an otherwise reliable work, Rock's *Church of our Fathers*, i. 435.

Both Eyre and Consitt think that the miracle might cease when faith ceased. There is, however, the fact that no trace of decomposed animal matter occurred. To me, of course, the subject is simply one of historical interest, it being matterless whether a saint is incorruptible, or, as in the case of Bede, corrupted.

In the foregoing paper I have followed Raine, p. 53, quoting a MS. by Prior Wessington, stating that it was Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, who, 'of the highest audacity,' raised the lid of St. Cuthbert's coffin. But I find, through a very useful series of papers on the dioceses of England, contained in Parker & Co.'s *Penny Post*,

that the visitant really was Elfwold, formerly a monk of Winchester, and afterwards Bishop of Sherborne. The authority quoted is William of Malmesbury—no mean one—who flourished some 300 years before Prior Wessington. It seems that Elfwold always had the antiphon concerning St. Cuthbert in his heart, and died singing it with voice and hand. His journey, 'ad sanctum Cuthbertum Dunelmum', is narrated, and so his 'audacity'. He left some 'pledge of his love'.

Ethelwold of Winchester is described by Godwin as turning honest priests, with their wives and children, into the world, in order to put in monks. We must be thankful that sacerdotalism is now under some control, feeble though that may be. One of Ethelwold's successors, Walkelyn, favoured not monks, but displaced them where he might, and put in secular priests in their room. What the relative merits of the two states might be, I know not.

In 1854, in our 4^{to} *Archaeologia Aeliana*¹ there was a modest 'Inquiry into the origin of the name Sunderland, and as to birthplace of the Venerable Bede'. Although Jarrow occurs last before Bede's expression, 'in territorio ejusdem monasterii', we should, as the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow were conjoint, and the former had a slight possession on the south side of the Wear, give the benefit of a doubt, and treat the phrase as possibly applying to the whole joint territory, meaning the territories of both bodies. There must necessarily have been a subdivision of some kind. Mr. Brown, in his 'Inquiry', admits that *territorium* and King Alfred's *sondorland* have general senses. Indeed, at the present day the word *territories* is prudently inserted in conveyances of any considerable estates. I have known the words *capital messuage* and *hereditaments* convey territories, much to the pecuniary satisfaction of the owner thereof as to minerals.

Monkton, with its Bede's Well, accompanied with the usual customs, and containing as many or more pins as there were coins in Coventina's Well, is traditionally the birthplace of Bede. In Camden's *Britain*, translated by Holland, and 'finally revised, amended, and enlarged, with sundry additions by the said author,' we read that beneath Gateshead, 'almost at the very mouth of Tine, is to be seene Girwy, now Iarrow, the native soile of Venerable Bede'. Ascending,

¹ Vol. IV., p. 277.

we come upon Harrison's most valuable description of the British rivers in 1585, when he sayeth of the Tine thus:—'Next to Jerro or Girwie, where Beda dwelled in an abbeie; now a gentleman's place, although the church be made a parish church, wereunto diverse towns resort, as Moonke Eaton, where Beda was borne, which is a mile from thence.' This Moonke-Eaton may possibly guide us to the correct pronounciation of Symeon's Munecatun.

Ascending again, we arrive at the earliest life of Bede. Stevenson believes that it was written before his remains were removed from those of St. Cuthbert, and were separately translated, as no allusion is made to the circumstance, which took place in 1104. At all events, five of the six copies of the life are of the same twelfth century. They state that 'he was a native of an inconsiderable village in the territory of Jarrow, past which sweeps the deep river Tyne, which falls into the ocean at no great distance'. Bishop Walcher's grant to the monks of the vill of Jarrow with its appurtenances—viz., Preston (extinct), Monkton, Hedworth, Hebburn, Westoe, and Harton—no doubt fairly represents the separate territory of Jarrow on the deep river.

The co-monastery of Jarrow being posterior in date to that of Wearmouth, and Bede, or his parents for him, electing the monastic life, there was no option but to be placed under the care of Benedict at Wearmouth. After the commencement of the monastery of Jarrow he was transferred to the care of Ceolfrith, the abbot thereof, and there, under the shadow of Monkton, Bede lived and died.

Upon the whole, I see no reason to disturb the ancient claims of Monkton, in the territory of Jarrow, to have been the birthplace of Bede. Still, it may be polite to make a few remarks upon the Sunderland claim.

The West-Saxon Alfred, the translator of Bede, had no knowledge of the Northern vernacular. Bede latinized Gateshead into *ad capræ caput*, an example followed by Florence of Worcester. Alfred saxonized this Latin into *Aet Hregeheafde*—not a bad translation, both *gat* and *hraege* meaning *goat*. His substitution of *sundorlande* for *territorio* is equally good; but he would know no more of Sunderland than he did of Gateshead.

In Bishop Morton's charter of 1634, the recital is that 'our borough of Sunderland-near-the-Sea, in the county palatine of Durham, is, and time out of mind hath been, an ancient borough, known by

the name of the *New Borough of Wearmouth*, and has had 'various ancient liberties and free customs, as well by prescription as by virtue of sundry charters, as well by grants and confirmation of the most famous kings of England as by sundry grants of our predecessors, Bishops of Durham.' Then comes a prayer for remedy of defects in charters, and for further liberties. Whatever all this grandiose language may mean, the exceptional phrase '*New Borough*' seems to be borrowed from a charter of Henry III., granting to 'our burgesses of the *New Borough of Warnemuth*' the customs of Newcastle and a mercatorial guild. Going upwards from 1634, we find that in the fifteenth century the borough mentioned as that of Sunderland nigh the Sea, or that of Sunderland. In the fourteenth century Sunderland is linked with the vill of Tunstall, in Bishop Fordham's Roll, and in Bishop Hatfield's Survey the Borough of Sunderland is found as having rendered yearly 20*l.* and then was let at only 6*l.* Passing by the charter of Henry III., we come to the doings of Bishop Pudsey. In his great survey, called '*Boldon-Buke*', the Borough of Wermouth is mentioned; and we have his charter to his Burgesses of Weremue, of customs according to the custom of the Burgesses of Newcastle. After this, the Pipe-Roll of 1197—'*Boldon-Buke*' having been compiled in 1183—we find mention of the town of Sunderland. This is the first occurrence of its name, intelligible as connected with the new borough sundered from the rest of Wearmouth, but not with any possession of the ancient monasteries, King Guthred's grant to the church of Durham only extending from Tyne to Wear. The Sunderland of Boldon-Buke is manifestly Sunderland Bridge, near Durham, as the lord of Butterby, the manor opposite, was paying in respect of a mill-dam.

The borough was new as compared with that of Durham, and perhaps with that of Gateshead, just as the castle on the Tyne was new as compared with Bamborough. The name of Sunderland is sufficiently explained by the sundering of the new borough from the rest of the South Wearmouth of King Athelstan's grant, in which it must have been included, otherwise we should have no evidence of its annexation to the church. Between the time of King Alfred and the first occurrence of the name Sunderland as applicable to the Borough of Wearmouth—*i.e.*, that portion of South Wearmouth which was held by freehold burgage tenure in contradistinction from the rest of the district—there is a gap of some 300 years.