

XVI.—A BULL OF ADRIAN IV. RELATING TO NEASHAM
PRIORY, CO. DURHAM.

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[Read on the 28th May, 1893.]

NEASHAM, a Benedictine nunnery, dedicated to the Virgin, was one of the two monasteries (St. Edmund's, Gateshead, being the other) within the palatinate that alone were independent of the church of Durham; it contained only eight female votaries, and appears to have been founded by an ancestor of Lord Dacre, one of the old barons of Greystoke.

Surtees says that the original charters of the house of Neasham have been preserved by the family of Lawson, to whom the monastery was granted at the Dissolution. The earliest is apparently a charter of Henry II. confirming the foundation.

The bull of Adrian IV. is dated 3rd February, 1156-57.¹ The charter of Henry II. is not dated. Henry came to the throne in October, 1154, and probably his charter may have been granted about 1164, when the Constitutions of Clarendon were passed by a general council of barons and prelates, and when various rules were made with reference to ecclesiastical property, one being that the churches belonging to the king's fee should not be granted in perpetuity without his consent. The charter is therefore probably of a later date than the bull.

In it he concedes and confirms, 'in perpetuam elemosinam,' to God and to St. Mary of 'Nesham,' and to the nuns there serving God, the site of the church, and the carucate of land given by Emma, called in the bull the daughter of Waldeof, but now described as de Teisa and as having given it with the consent of her son Ralph. He also confirms the grant made by Engelais, here called the sister of Emma, the gift of Alan, son of Torfin, of land in Toretona, and an additional gift not mentioned in the bull, of two oxgangs (*bovatas terre*) in Neasham, by Alan de Eggescliva. Ralph fitz Ralph confirms, in a later charter, the gifts of Emma, his mother. William fitz Ralph confirms the charter of his father Ralph and adds more land.

¹ 1157 according to our reckoning. Adrian was at Benevento from January to July, 1156; he was, however, at Rome in January and February, 1157, in which month several bulls were issued by him from the Lateran.

Then Ralph fitz William, lord of Neasham, again gives to the nuns the whole plot called the Milne hills of Kent, lying betwixt Kent and the nun's land in the village of Neasham, in breadth and length from le Croké, betwixt the said plot and Hurthworth lands to Kent bridge. Seal (white-wax): *Barry, over all three chaplets* for Greystoke.

Up to the time of Henry VII. other gifts of land which are detailed in Surtees, *Durham*, vol. iii., page 259, were made from time to time to the nuns. And in 1540 when dame Joan Lawson the last prioress surrendered the house to the king, 29th December, the revenues were reported as follows:—

Priory, orchard, garden with eight oxgangs of land			
in the manor of the prioress	xl ^s
Total rents, etc., in Durham...	xxiv ^l i ^s xi ^d
Do. do. Yorkshire	vi ^s x ^d

xxvi^l ix^s ix^d

The clear value after deductions being £20 17s. 7d.

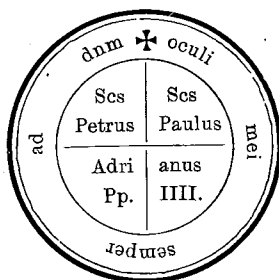
Not one stone of the old priory now remains upon another. James Lawson of Newcastle purchased the property for £227 5s. 0d., and the old charters connected with the priory are still in the possession of his descendant Sir John Lawson of Bròugh.

The bull, which is written in the ecclesiastical Latin of the period, is the property of Mr. Salvin and has been kindly lent by him. It is an excellent specimen of caligraphy. It is in a remarkably good state of preservation, and is signed by the pope and nineteen other cardinals and bishops. The leaden 'bulla' attached is also perfect. The following is an exact transcript of the text carefully collated with the original:—

Adrianus Episcopus Servus servorum Dei dilectis in Christo filiabus sanctimonialibus in Ecclesia Sancte Marie de Neshann Domino servientibus tam presentibus quam futuris regularam vitam professis in perpetuum.

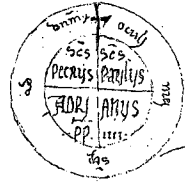
Prudentibus virginibus que sub habitu religionis disposuerunt Jesu Christo vero sponso lampadibus accensis occurrere. Tanto sunt a sacrosancta Romana Ecclesia ampliora beneficia conferenda quanto propensius in servitio domini comorari noscuntur, et ad nuptias eterni regis bonis operibus festinare. Ea propter dilecte in Christo filie vestris justis postulationibus clementer annuimus, et prefatum monasterium in quo divino mancipate estis obsequio, sub beati Petri et nostra protectione suscipimus et presentis scripti privilegio communimus. In primis siquidem statuantes ut ordo monasticus qui secundum Deum

et beati benedicti regulam in eodem loco dinoscitur institutus, perpetuis ibidem temporibus et inviolabiliter observetur. Preterea quascumque possessionis quecumque bona idem monasterium in presentiarum juste et canonice possedet, aut in futurum concessione pontificum, largitione regum vel principum, oblatione fidelium, seu aliis justis modis per ante domino poterit adipisci, firma vobis vestrisque successoribus et illibata permaneant. In quibus hec propriis duximus exprimendi vocabulis. Locum in quo prefata ecclesia sita est, qui dicitur Mahaldecroft, quem dedit vobis Emma filia Waldef, unam carrucatam terre de dominico ejusdem Emme. In Neshann, cum medietate Offnamarum suarum, in culturis pratis et turbariis, communem pasturam totius terre sue. Culturam que vocatur Sadelflat. Molendinum super Kent. Culturam que est inter molendinum et ecclesiam. Ex dono Engelais unam carrucatam terre. Omnes decimas vestras de dominico vestro in Neshaim, tam in blado quam in aliis. Ex dono halani filii Torphin unam carrucatam terre in phornetuna. Sane novalium vestrorum que propriis manibus aut sumptibus colitis sive de nutrimentis vestrorum animalium, nullus a vobis decimas exigere presumat. Sepulturam quoque ipsius loci liberam esse concedimus ut eorum devotioni et extreme voluntati nullus obsistat qui se illic sepeliri deliberaverint nisi forte excommunicati vel interdicti sint. Salva tamen justitia matricis ecclesie. Decernimus ergo ut nulli omnino hominum liceat prefatis ecclesiam temere perturbare, aut ejus possessiones auferre, vel ablatas retinere, minuere, seu quibus libet vexationibus fatigare. Set illibata omnia et integra conserventur eorum pro quorum gubernatione et sustentatione concessa sunt usibus omnimodis futura. Salva sedis apostalice auctoritate, et diocesani episcopi canonica justitia. Siqua igitur in futurum ecclesiastica secularisve persona hanc nostre constitutionis paginam sciens, contra eam temere venire temptaverit. Secundo tertio commonita, nisi presumptionem suam digna satisfactione correxerit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat, reamque se divino judicio existere de perpetrata iniquitate cognoscat et a sacratissimo corpore ac sanguine dei et domini redemptoris nostri Jesu Christi aliena fiat, atque in extremo examine districte ultionis subjaceat. Cunctis autem eidem loco sua jura servantibus, sit pax domini nostri Jesu Christi. Quatinus et hic fructum bone actionis percipiant, et apud districtum judicem premia eterne pacis inveniant. Amen. Amen. Amen.²



Ego Adrianus Catholice Ecclesie
Episcopus. Bene Valet.

² The legend on the bulla, 'Oculi mei semper ad Dominum,' was one generally used by Adrian IV.



Handwritten signatures in Gothic script, including 'adrianus', 'athouce', 'felle', 'lps', and 'SNA'.

Four vertical lines of signatures, each preceded by a cross symbol. The text includes: 'Ego hubaldus pbr card. et see luxedis', 'Ego manfredus pbr card. et see laune', 'Ego bernardus pbr card. et see clemens', and 'Ego planarius pbr card. et see leahie'.

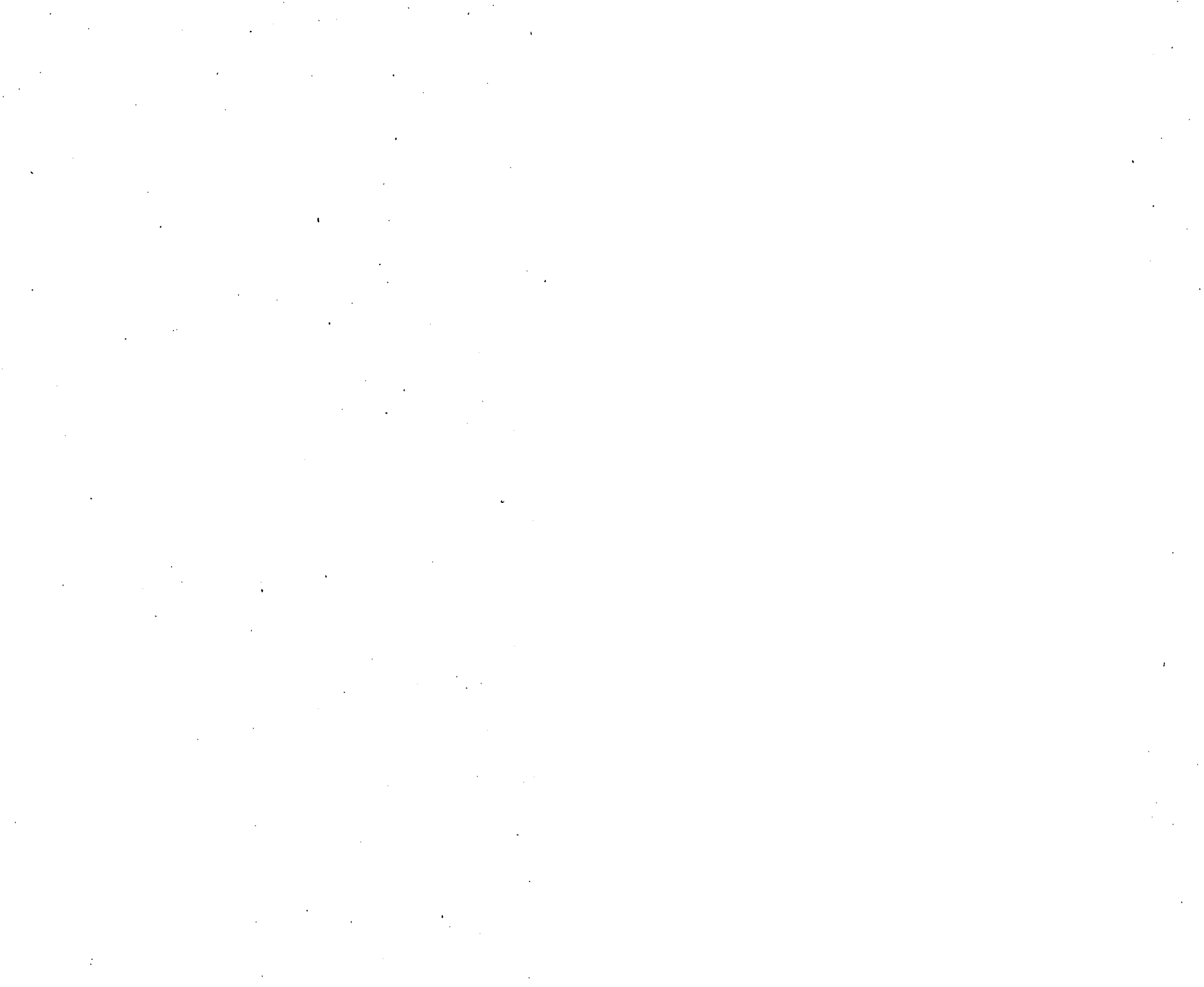
Two vertical lines of signatures, each preceded by a cross symbol. The text includes: 'Ego marcus' and 'Ego lencius'.

Five vertical lines of signatures, each preceded by a cross symbol. The text includes: 'Ego odello', 'Ego rodulphus', 'Ego gualtero', 'Ego jacintus', and 'Ego iohannes'.

Three vertical lines of signatures, each preceded by a cross symbol. The text includes: 'Ego altholdus', 'Ego Gerardus', and 'Ego iohannes'.

One vertical line of a signature, preceded by a cross symbol. The text includes: 'Ego iohannes'.

FAC-SIMILE OF SIGNATURES TO BULL OF ADRIAN IV. RELATING TO NEASHAM.



- ✠ Ego hubaldus pbr. card. titulo sce Praxedis.³
- ✠ Ego Manfredus pbr. card. tt. sce Sabine.⁴
- ✠ Ego bernardus pbr. card. tt. sce Clementis.⁵
- ✠ Ego octavianus pbr. card. tt. sce Cecilie.⁶
- ✠ Ego Imarus Tusculanus Episcopus.⁷
- ✠ Ego Cencius portuensis et sce Rufine episcopus.⁸
- ✠ Ego Gr[egorius] Sabinensis Episcopus.
- ✠ Ego oddo diac card. sci Georii ad velum aureum.⁹
- ✠ Ego rodolfus diac card. sce Lucie in septa solis.¹⁰
- ✠ Ego guido diac card. Sce Marie in porticu.¹¹
- ✠ Ego Jacintus diac card. Sce Marie in cosmydyn.¹²
- ✠ Ego Johs sci Sergii et Bacchi diac card.¹³
- ✠ Ego odo diac card. sci Nicholai in carcere Tulliano.¹⁴
- ✠ Ego bonadies diac card. sci Angeli¹⁵
- ✠ Ego ardcio diac card. sci Theodori.
- ✠ Ego Astaldus pbr. card. tt. sce Prisce.¹⁶
- ✠ Ego Gerardus pbr. card. tt. sci. Stephani in celio monte.¹⁷

³ Ubaldo Alluciguoli, afterwards pope Lucius III.; cardinal priest of St. Prassede, 1140-1158.—*Storia dei Cardinali di Santa Romana Chiesa*, by count Francesco Cristofori, Rome, 1888, *Cronotassi dei Cardinali*, vol. i. p. 61.

⁴ Manfred, cardinal priest of St. Sabina from 1144.—*Ibid.* p. 127.

⁵ Bernardo, a canon regular, cardinal priest of St. Clement, 1145-1176.—*Ibid.* p. 85.

⁶ Ottaviano da Monticello, cardinal priest of St. Cecilia from 1150.—*Ibid.* p. 67.

⁷ Iemaro, of the order of Cluny, bishop of Frascati (Tusculum) 1142(?)—1164. *Ibid.* p. 26.

⁸ Cencio, bishop of Porto and St. Rufina, 1159(?).—*Ibid.* p. 12. Judging from the present bull, the date should be 1156, or earlier.

⁹ Ottone da Cesena, cardinal deacon of St. George, in Velabro, from 1130.—*Ibid.* p. 241.

¹⁰ Rodolfo, cardinal deacon of St. Lucia, in Septisolio, from 1144.—*Ibid.* p. 230.

¹¹ Guido, cardinal deacon of St. Maria, in Porticu, from 1145.—*Ibid.* p. 217.

¹² Giacinto Bobone Orsini, cardinal deacon of St. Maria in Cosmedin, 1144-1191, afterwards pope Celestine III.—*Ibid.* p. 259.

¹³ Giovanni, cardinal deacon of SS. Sergius and Bacchus from 1145.—*Ibid.* p. 231. The only other cardinal deacon of the name of Giovanni at the time of the Neasham bull was Giovanni Pizzuto, who bore the title of St. Maria Nuova, 1155-1158.—*Ibid.* p. 223.

¹⁴ Ottone da Brescia, cardinal deacon of St. Nicholas, in Carcere Tulliano, 1145-1150(?).—*Ibid.* p. 246. The Neasham bull adds six years for certain to this cardinal's life.

¹⁵ Bonadies de Bonadie, cardinal deacon of St. Angelo, in Pcscheria, from 1155.—*Ibid.* p. 249.

¹⁶ Astallo Astalli, cardinal priest of St. Prisca from 1145; from 1158, Actaldo(?).—*Ibid.* p. 107. The Neasham bull seems to rectify this last date, and render it probable that these names belong to one and the same cardinal.

¹⁷ Gerardo (Bernardo), cardinal priest of St. Stefano, on Monte Celio, from 1159.—*Ibid.* p. 118. The Neasham bull settles the name as Gerardo, and shows that he must have been created some three years earlier, unless these slight discrepancies are held to impugn its authenticity. They should hardly do so, since the authorities for the dates of these early cardinals appear to be very meagre.

- ✠ Ego Johs pbr. card. sanctorum Johannis et P(auli) et pagii (Pamachii).
 ✠ Ego Johs. pbr. card. tt. sanctorum Silvestri et martini.¹⁸

Datum Laterani manum Rolandi sancte Romane Ecclesie pbri Cardinalis et Cancellarii. iiii nones Febr. in dictione v. Incarnationis dominice Anno m c l. vi. Pontificatus vero domini Adriani pp iii. anno iii.

The bulla has above the heads of Peter and Paul, s PA[ulus], s PE[trus], and on the reverse :—

ADRI
 ANUS
 pp iv

The following is a translation of the document :—

Adrian, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his beloved daughters in Christ, the holy nuns now or in future serving the Lord in the Church of the Blessed Mary of Nesham, and professed in perpetuity to a regular life.

To the prudent virgins who in religious garb with lighted lamps have set themselves in order to go to meet Jesus Christ the true bridegroom. In so much as they are known to be more inclined to sojourn in the service of the Lord and to hasten through good works to the nuptials of the Eternal King, so the more benefits to be conferred upon them by the Holy Roman Church. Therefore, beloved daughters in Christ, we, of our clemency, assent to your just requests, and we take under the protection of Saint Peter and of ourselves the aforesaid monastery, of which by the Divine indulgence you are now possessed, and this we confirm by the authority of this present writing. Firstly, decreeing that inasmuch as the monastic order according to God and the rule of Saint Benedict is known to be established in the same place, that it be there observed inviolate in perpetuity. Further, whatever possessions, whatever goods the said monastery at present legally and canonically holds or may in future obtain possession of, by concession of Pontiffs, by liberality of Kings or Princes, by oblations of the faithful or by other methods legal before the Lord, they shall remain firmly secured and unimpaired to you and your successors. Amongst which we have expressly mentioned : The place in which the before-named church is situated, called Mahaldecroft,¹⁹ which Emma, the daughter of Waldef, gave to you ; one carucate of land of the lordship of the said Emma in Nesham, with a moiety of her *offnamarum*²⁰ in cultivated land in meadow and in turbarry, and common pasture of all her land ; the cultivated ground which is called Sadelflat¹⁹ ; the mill upon the Kent ; the cultivated ground between the mill and the church. Of the gift of Engelais one carucate of land ; all your tithes of your lordship in Nesham whether in corn or otherwise. Of the gift of Halan, son of Torphin, one carucate of land in Phornetuna.²¹ No one shall presume to demand tithes

¹⁸ Giovanni da Mercone, cardinal priest of S. Silvestro e Martino ai Monti from 1145.—*Ibid.* p. 71.

¹⁹ In the grant to Lawson, 32 Henry VIII., there is mention of ' a close called Madencrofte,' also of ' a close called Saddelflat.'

²⁰ ' Offnamarum.' What is the meaning of this word ?

²¹ Meant for ' Thornetona.' See deed of Henry II. Surtees, *Durham*, vol. iii., p. 238, and in Dugdale's account of the monastery mention is made of land in ' Thornton.'

from the land which you have brought under cultivation with your own hands or by hired labour, or of the food for your animals. We also concede free right of sepulture at the same place, so that no one shall make any opposition to the piety or last wishes of those who may have thought of being buried there, unless perchance they may be excommunicate or under interdict: Saving, however, the rights of the Mother Church.

We decree, therefore, that it is unlawful for any man to rashly disturb in any way the said church, either to take away its possessions or to retain them if taken, to diminish or harass it by any vexatious proceedings whatever; but all things shall be preserved whole and unimpaired of those for whose future government and sustentation they are conceded with use and enjoyment of all kinds. Saving the authority of the Apostolic See and the canonical rights of the bishop of the diocese.

If therefore, in future, any person, ecclesiastic or layman, being cognizant of this our written ordinance, be rashly tempted to act contrary to it with a second or third reminding, unless he make amends for his presumption by suitable satisfaction, he shall be deprived of his power, honour and dignity; he will know himself to be a criminal under divine judgment for perpetrated iniquity; he will be debarred from partaking of the most sacred body and blood of God and our Lord Redeemer Jesus Christ, and at the last judgment will be subject to the severest punishment.

But the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with all in this same place who keep his laws, so that here they will be partakers of the fruit of good works, and when before the severe Judge will receive the rewards of eternal peace. Amen. Amen. Amen.

LEADEN *bullæ* OF ADRIAN IV.